A SHORT AND FAMILIAR

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

ST. MATTHEW,

DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS & FAMILIES.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES WICKSTEED, B.A.

MINISTER OF MILL-HILL CHAPEL, LEEDS.

PUBLISHED BY THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

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PREFACE.

The present Commentary was commenced a few years since with the hope of affording some assistance to Teachers, and especially to Sunday-school Teachers, in the instruction of their classes, and to parents in the instruction of the younger members of their families, and it was continued at the request of the Committee of the Sunday-school Association, at whose expense and under whose auspices it is now published. I have heard no want more frequently expressed and regretted than that of a brief, familiar, and accessible explanation of the most important and commonly read portions of Scripture. Of the works published in this country which have most met this want, the Exposition of the Historical Books of the New Testament, by the late Rev. Timothy Kenrick, is in every way the best. Of this aid to religious instruction extensive use has been made, and especially by private families or small societies of Christians, prevented by distance or other causes from being able regularly to attend social religious services, in which they could profitably and conscientiously unite. Something, however, different both in direct object and in extent and price is contemplated in the present smaller work.

The Commentary of Dr. Adam Clarke on the whole Scriptures possesses many admirable qualities of a popular kind—an immense mass of learned and general illustration, and great earnestness and fulness of moral application. But it is marked very prominently by theological views not in accordance, in the opinion of those whose wants I desire to meet, with scriptural truth. His material, also, is gathered with a large but not always discriminating appetite, and sometimes is, in consequence, not very accurately sifted, or admissible as evidence or illustration in the connection in which it is cited. It is, further, a voluminous work, consisting of six massive volumes, and therefore necessarily expensive.* The Family Bible of the learned and reverend Mr. Wellbeloved is characterized by a happy admixture of the results of long-continued and laborious critical study and practical wisdom; and to any one who is reading the *Old* Testament with young people its exposition of the early historical and the devotional and didactic books (to which it is at present confined) will be found a most valuable aid.† The service which the Editor of the Pictorial Bible has done the cause of scriptural illustration, by his collection of so much that art, science, history, and personal observation have contributed to its elucidation, is everywhere acknowledged with gratitude. But in the New Testament the paucity of his otherwise admirable notes is extremely disappointing, and a certain theological timidity, which pervades the work, entirely excludes many much-needed explanations. This work, however, from the designed limitation of its purpose, indicated in the title, added to its size and cost, does not meet the wants now contemplated. To those who have not on their shelves (or if within their reach, have not time to consult) the concentrated learning of Winer, and the sources of information

* I see with pleasure that the price of this work is now reduced to three guineas. Some of the same objections apply to D'Oyley and Mant's Family Bible.

† This work, also, I rejoice to learn, is to be brought more within the reach and means of a large class of readers.

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to which he, and such as he, refer (and to how many of our educated men and busy ministers and teachers must this apply?) Dr. Beard has furnished a most acceptable gift, in his People's Dictionary of the Bible, the aid of which should be secured, at least, to every Sunday-school and family library. All of these works, essentially popular in their design and character, will continue to be read and consulted with advantage by all who may be able to command the means of doing so; but a class of persons has arisen since, at least, the earlier of these works were commenced, uncontemplated by their authors, but whom it is the object of the present humble undertaking to serve. Of the varied and original sources of the *scholar's* study of the Scriptures it is not the design of this Preface to speak; these, from their rarity, from their voluminousness, from their learned character, and often from the languages through the medium of which they are alone to be studied, are sealed fountains to the general reader.

The only work which I know as, on the whole, fulfilling the object which I have had in view in preparing the present exposition, is the Commentary on the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, by the Rev. Abiel A. Livermore, of New Hampshire, United States, republished at Belfast by the Northern Sunday-school Association. Though this book was not composed expressly for the object now contemplated, yet its full and familiar explanations, its rational and candid tone, and, above all, its earnest and beautiful applications of the sacred teachings, pointed it out as peculiarly calculated to assist the instructor of the young. I discovered, however, with regret, on frequently recommending its use, that its notes were found too minute, too long, and too diffuse, for those who, for the most part, required something that should furnish them with the material of exposition and remark during the time of reading or teaching. The text, too, in the republication, was omitted; a fatal objection, which involved the use of *two* books in the class, or the careful preparation and retentive mastery of the contents of the commentary before the class met.* By the republication of this work the Northern Association has conferred a great benefit on the cause of the scriptural instruction of the young, and had the notes been greatly curtailed, and the text preserved, the present work would never have been undertaken. Of Mr. Livermore's commentary I have made, as it is, however, great use, not so much in the critical matter (of which a large proportion is now common to all commentators†, and in which I have not thought it right to follow any compilation as an authority) as in the moral reflections, which, whether original or quoted, strike me as being among the best and happiest I have ever seen.‡

What, then, I have aimed at preparing is a very brief and simple ex-

* This omission was made with a view to diminish the cost, but is, I am glad to observe, remedied in the Acts of the Apostles.

† Among the authors enumerated by Mr. Livermore as consulted or studied by him in the preparation of his Commentary is Mr. Kenrick. To this writer's Exposition, published between forty and fifty years since, it would be impossible to say how much divines of his school have been indebted, as he, in a great measure, in modern times broke up the ground for them. In the immense mass of material that is now common to every exposition, the claims of the originator are often too remote or too confounded with those of others to be ascertained. With regard to Mr. Kenrick, I could not say how much or how little I may now be indebted to an author whose views and explanations entered into the staple of my mind twenty years ago.

‡ I should not omit to mention the services rendered in the same direction by the Rev. R. B. Maclellan, in his Exposition of St. Matthew's Gospel, and by the Rev. John Wright, in his valuable Introduction to the Bible.

planation of the text of St. Matthew's Gospel, such as a father or mother may take up in reading with their children, or a teacher with his pupils, and find of service in supplying an interpretation of the meaning, phraseology, and religious purpose of the material before them.

Keeping this class of readers steadily before my mind, I have avoided every thing which I thought would be unsuitable, and omitted nothing, however obvious and generally known, which I thought might be required by them. In pursuance of this object I have avoided the whole class of questions relating to the precise age, origin, and structure of the Gospels themselves—questions in altogether too unsettled a state, as regards definite result, and requiring for their adequate examination too large an amount of thought and study—to be profitably brought before the minds of those whom I am desirous of serving. In the second place, I have endeavoured to condense every explanation as much as possible, and to avoid all unnecessary forms of expression. I have made few references to differences of opinion, and have avoided discussions and the balancing of conflicting evidences and authorities. I have in all cases gone through this process anew myself, to ascertain how far my previously-formed opinions required modification or remained the same. But to the reader I have usually supplied simply what appeared to me, on the whole, the truest result. The consequence has often been, that several hours' study, and the consultation of a dozen or twenty different writers, has ended in some note of simple statement, consisting of two or three lines; in the adoption of the most common, possibly, of all the explanations offered; or in passing over the verse without any of the observations or explanations usually appended to it. I have exercised my judgment as carefully as I could, and have offered my reader merely the result.

In the third place, I have endeavoured to avoid all lengthened didactic observations, such as might naturally occur to any right-minded person of any tolerable moral fertility without a formal suggestion. And I have further endeavoured to avoid such comments of this nature as would appear, from their character and detail, to belong more properly to the sphere of the pulpit. This last has been a simple matter of necessity and concession to space. To those who know how quick and clever in his replies, and how full in his information, on the dress and material of the Scripture, a young person may be into whose soul its moral earnestness and religious truth have made but little way, it will not be necessary to say that this part of the instruction of the young—this culture of their religious affections and moral convictions—is *the great object* of the study of the Scriptures. If this be a living assurance in the heart of the Teacher, the suggestions which I have thrown into the notes of moral and religious applications will be enough; but if it be not, it can only be by a longer discipline, and a more personally experimental process than such a commentary can afford, that it can be infused. Information and illustration in the study of the Scripture are only means for quickening the spiritual nature, according to that union of the intellect and the affections which God has made a characteristic of our moral being, and by whose combined action it is that we can alone be brought near Himself.*

Again, there are many passages so rich in their simplicity and so simple and manifest in their riches, that any comment on them, except that which

* See Miss Carpenter's Reformatory Schools, published since this was written.

would flow from the heart of the Teacher, seemed to me an absolute intrusion. Contrary to ordinary practice, therefore, I have left them quite alone—to speak without interpreter—where words would only have darkened their beautiful counsel.

I have further supposed the Teacher or Parent to have an ordinary knowledge of his mother-tongue, and have not, therefore, stopped to explain how "their eyes were opened" meant that "they were restored to sight,"—how "straitly charged them" meant "strictly commanded them,"—how "his countenance" meant "his appearance or aspect,"—that "answered and spake" meant "proceeded to speak."* It seems to me, that such a loading of the text with mere synonymous matter, simply for the sake of not leaving two verses, or half-a-dozen verses together, without comment, has merely the effect of deadening the faculties, till the reader is at last led to doubt whether he can, unaided, understand the plainest possible statement in his own tongue.

With regard to the translation, I have compared every verse of the Common Version with the original Greek, and with several other translations, especially the recent English ones of Mr. Edgar Taylor and Mr. S. Sharpe. My object has been, in accordance with the general design of this Exposition, to make no change on merely critical grounds; but only where the common translation conveyed an actually wrong or a very clouded meaning. The temptation afforded by the translations to which I have specially referred to admit improved readings has indeed been great, particularly in the case of Mr. Sharpe, the great acuteness and wakefulness, so to speak, of whose translation, render it to the intelligent reader a species of commentary in itself.† The translations which I have admitted, therefore, I have thought imperative; not *substituting* them, however, for the text of the common version, but *adding* them in italics and enclosed in brackets, immediately after the word to which they immediately belonged. This mode has been adopted, not only for the sake of supplying the shortest and soundest explanation but of avoiding the iteration of such remarks in the notes as these, "the above expression does not fully convey the meaning of the sacred writer"—"this should rather be rendered," &c., &c.

Although often necessarily referring to the other Evangelists, I have rarely done this except when it appeared indispensable to clear up the meaning of St. Matthew; for, though there is an unquestionable advantage in the study of the Gospels through the medium of a harmony or monotessaron, I do not think the plan entirely unobjectionable of practically throwing the Gospels into one, even while reading them separately, by continually filling up the narrative in each from the specialities and varieties of the others. This would be right in a Life of Christ; but, pursued in a commentary on each gospel, it has a tendency to destroy the varied character of the evangelical records as distinct and separate accounts, or combinations of accounts. It has the effect of making the reader, after going through St. Matthew, feel as if he were passing over exactly the same ground again when he comes to St. Mark or St. Luke, instead of encountering the narrative, as he should do, in a fresh form, from a fresh mind, and with distinct characteristics and specialities of its own. On the

* These are genuine extracts.

† Indeed, I have heard men engaged in the humblest daily toil make this remark of Mr. Sharpe's translation, as the effect produced by it on their own minds.

contrary, the commentator should, as far as possible, take his tone from the Gospel he is expounding, and, instead of reducing it to a common centre, should follow his author, pausing where he pauses, passing on where he passes on, giving prominence to his peculiarities. The common plan also leads the commentator to throw all his strength into the first Gospel, and to fill up his notes on the two following mainly with references to the first.* The effect upon the reader is correspondent: it makes him usually prefer that Gospel which is most carefully explained, and avoid the fatigue and unsatisfactoriness of reading the others through the medium of a series of references to the parallel passages in the first. Each Gospel should, on the contrary, be regarded as a substantive narrative, and, except as regards the material which is open and common to all, an independent narrative. No doubt, it may be presumed that the reader from his study of the first Gospel will not require all of the same explanations over again, in, at least, the same amplitude; but he should, at any rate, be made to feel that he can read the Gospel by the light of the explanations appended to that Gospel, and not find himself unable to proceed ten verses together without being driven back upon a previous Gospel, and the exposition given to it. In commentaries intended for the learned, and where the questions and topics common to all the Gospels are often discussed at great length, and with great laboriousness in the first, the reference, instead of the repetition, is inevitable. But in brief and popular explanations it is better to repeat in substance, in, perhaps, some other and still shorter form, what may be necessary to illustrate the text of the Gospel which is then under consideration, in order that the reader may, as he reads, have it directly before him. As, however, the comparison of Gospel with Gospel, and the illustration of Gospel by Gospel, is in itself a most interesting and valuable employment, some means will be afforded of doing this where there is no access to a regular harmony or monotessaron, by the marginal references at the bottom of the text.† Where I have thought the reference, whether to the corresponding part in another Gospel, or, more generally to some other portion of the Scriptures, particularly appropriate, I have often quoted it in full, and not merely given the chapter and verse, convinced that when these alone are given, the reference is too generally passed over altogether by the class of readers whom I have in view.

I presume that most persons of any intellectual activity have felt a certain weary unwillingness come over their minds to repeat to the same, and especially to successive sets of young people, the identical explanations of words and phrases, customs and applications, which, nevertheless, are always found necessary with every new mind coming to the study of the Scriptures. To such it is hoped that something in the way of a text-book, where the process and the necessary references and expositions are regularly set down, may be found a useful mnemonic, as it were, not requiring the effort of a spontaneous and self-originated effort of iteration each time; and helping them to combat with the temptation to pass on from material already so familiar to themselves, but not to their catechumens, to subjects more interesting and less worn to their own minds, but, for which, it may be, those whom they are teaching have not had the necessary foundation laid.

* On this principle the late Rev. T. Kenrick omitted Mark altogether.

† A Monotessaron, or weaving of the four Gospels into one, has recently been prepared by the Rev. R. L. Carpenter, on the basis of his father's well-known Harmony.

I have inserted little geographical information in the notes, for it is sometimes made use of in classes as a substitute for the consultation of *maps*, dictionaries, and geographies. Dr. Beard's Dictionary, Carpenter's and Bowring's Geographies, with other accessible books, should be used—the latter to some extent, as separate class-books—for this purpose.

There is another feature of most expositions on the Gospels which will probably be noticed as omitted in this; I mean, the laborious attempts made at reconciling the discrepancies which are found, sometimes apparent only, but often real, between the accounts of the same event or discourse given by the several Evangelists. I have not challenged attention frequently to these by seeking to account for or explain them, partly because I think such discrepancies are often real, and not to be explained away, and partly because I see no object in most instances in shewing that they do not exist. They are the natural and honest result of actual varieties in the position of the observer or the circumstances of the recorder; and the necessity under which commentators have supposed themselves to lie of reducing them all to a strict actual accordance, has arisen from an artificial and unfounded view of the nature and composition of the records themselves.

Of a very copious and most interesting source of illustration from the learned labours of Lightfoot, in his Horæ Talmudicæ, I felt at one time much disposed to avail myself. But a fear that, upon the whole, their value or bearing might not be fully perceived, and that they might themselves, by different versions of similar parables or proverbs, create confusion, added to the sense of doubt as to the age to which these might be attributed, and whether they might be safely regarded as existing so long previous to the time of their actual collection, has induced me, with some unwillingness, almost to omit a class of expository matter which has such a peculiar charm to the observer of the ethics of human nature in all ages.

Now and then I have left a verse or a passage unexplained, not because its meaning was obvious, but from a dissatisfaction with the adequacy of any explanation offered—a feeling, even, that a certain undefined impression of wonder, of unsatisfiedness, of spiritual curiosity, was, on the whole, the best and truest impression with which the reader could be left.

I cannot conclude these prefatory remarks without adding that I have been permitted, by the kindness of the Rev. Wm. Turner, M.A., of Halifax, to lay the proofs of this little work, as they passed through the press, beneath his accurate eye. This I mention as a guarantee to my readers, as it certainly is a satisfaction to myself, that, without involving Mr. Turner in any responsibility for any of the material of the work, no known error of fact or statement will have been admitted from want of due care.

If the Exposition should be found useful in our schools and families, so as to encourage the Association in the publication of the remaining Gospels, I shall gratefully and happily apply myself, with what portion of leisure I can command, to the preparation of similar short and familiar commentaries on them. In the mean time, I humbly implore for my effort the blessing of that Great Being, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHARLES WICKSTEED.

Barkstone Ashe, October, 1851.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

The lineage of Jesus.

CHAPTER I.

THE book of the generation [*lineage*] of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.[a]

2. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

3. And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

4. And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon.

5. And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

6. And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife of Urias;*

7. And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

8. And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

9. And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;

10. And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

11. And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

12. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

13. And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;

a Luke iii, 23—38.

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1. *The book of the generation.* Table or list of the ancestors of Jesus, as in Gen. v, 1; xi, 10. This is the heading or title, not of the whole Gospel, but only of the beginning. The Jews attached great importance to the preservation of their genealogies. When they returned from Babylon and the Temple was rebuilt, (about B.C. 530), those priests who could not find their registers were put away from the priesthood, Ezra ii, 61, 62.—*Jesus Christ.* Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Joshua, which means Saviour. Christ is the Gr. word and Messiah the Heb. word for *anointed.* Thus, Jesus Christ is Jesus the Messiah, or the Saviour anointed. He was called Jesus because he came to *save* his people from their sins; see v, 21. Priests, kings, and prophets, were set apart for their respective offices by pouring oil upon them. See for instances relating to priests, Exod. xxviii, 41; Levit. xvi, 32; Numbers xxxv, 25; to kings, I Sam. x, 1; I Kings i, 39, xix, 16; to prophets, I Kings xix, 16; Isai. lxi, 1. In like manner, our Lord was spiritually anointed to preach glad tidings to the world, and to be a messenger of another and better covenant.—*The Son of David, the Son of Abraham,* in accordance with the promise and the expectation, that the Messiah should be of the seed of Abraham, and of the family of David, Gen. xxii, 18; Matt. xii, 23; Luke i, 69, 70.

2. *Judas and his brethren.* His brethren are added, not because they had any thing to do with the genealogy, but, as it were, parenthetically, and by way of allusion, as the distinguished heads of eleven of the twelve tribes. Some of the names in this list are changed from the Hebrew to the Greek mode of spelling, as Judah to Judas, and Hesron to Esrom.

3. *Phares and Zara.* The latter mentioned because he was a twin, Gen. xxxviii, 27.

5. *Ruth.* It was not usual with the Jews to introduce the names of women into their genealogical tables: an exception is here made on account of the celebrity of the parties.

11. *Carried away to Babylon.* The Babylonish captivity began about 600 B.C. and ended about 530 B.C. Babylon was an Asiatic empire, sometimes included under the more comprehensive name of Chaldea. The capital, also called Babylon, situated on the Euphrates, was celebrated for its Temple of Belus, its hanging gardens, and its vast extent. Herodotus describes its walls as 350 feet high, 87½ feet thick, and 60 miles in circuit. The circumference of oriental cities was immense, for they included a large extent of pasture and ornamental grounds; but, that there should have been sixty miles of wall of such an uniform height and thickness it is difficult to believe.

Announcement of the birth of Jesus.

14. And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;

15. And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan, and Matthan begat Jacob;

16. And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17. So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

18. ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost *(Spirit)*.[b]

19. Then Joseph her husband, being a just [*righteous*] *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost [*Spirit*].[c]

21. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS *(Saviour)*: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a

b Luke i, 27—38.

c Luke i, 35.

17. *Fourteen generations.* According to the Old Testament there were *seventeen* generations in the second period. In the table from which the evangelist copied three of these must have been omitted, and thus the periods bore the appearance of being equal; and this supposed equality was adopted, according to a common custom, as a guide and aid to the memory.

21. *Save his people from their sins.* This is the sense in which the word *Jesus* or *Saviour* is always to be applied to the Messiah. He came to save us from our own sins. In doing so, he would also save us from the displeasure of the Almighty, from the weakness of our own nature, when unaided by his own holy influences, and from the punishments visited on sin both now and hereafter. The primary object of Christ's mission, however, is to save us, not so much from outward punishment as from inward evil—not to deliver us from God as our foe, but to bring us to God as our friend—not to rescue us from the entailed curse of Adam's transgression, so much as to rescue us from the curse of false religion, evil passions, and bad conduct in ourselves. Inasmuch as this work of grace is actually accomplished in our hearts, we attain unto the salvation which is by Jesus Christ.

23. *Emmanuel.* This name, signifying *God is with us*, was first applied to a child who was to be born in the reign of Ahaz (Isaiah vii, 10—16), between 700 and 800 B.C.; and who was to be a sign of the presence of God's mercy to that king. It is here applied with still more force and propriety—as to a greater sign of the presence of God with his people—to Jesus Christ. It is the pervading spirit of the Old Testament dispensation to point out the connexion of Providence with human affairs; and this connexion is frequently commemorated by compound names significant of the fact. Thus, Jacob early calls the place of his communion with God, *Bethel*, or House-of-God. Moses calls the altar which he built in commemoration of the victory over the Amalekites, and of the sign which his uplifted hands gave to the people, Jehovah-nissi, Jehovah-is-my ensign or banner. So Ezekiel (xlviii, 35) calls the city of his vision, Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord-is-there. The original design of many of the names of persons, afterwards common among the Jews, was, no doubt, similar. Thus, one man was called *Eli*, or, *My-God;* another, Elihu, *My-God-Himself;* another, Daniel, *God-my-Judge*. These religious associations were not indulged in to the exclusion of references to the commoner feelings of our human life. Isaac was an unexpected blessing to his parents, and was therefore so called, his name signifying *laughter* or *gladness*. On the contrary, the dying Rachel gave to her new-born babe the name of Benoni, *son-of-my-sorrow*, which Jacob, however, afterwards changed to Benjamin, *son-of-my-right-hand*, as s mark of his tender affection (Gen. xxxv, 18). The

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son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us [*which is, interpreted, With-us-God*].

24. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25. And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

of the Magi.

CHAPTER II.

NOW when Jesus was born, in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East [*Magi from the East came*] to Jerusalem,

2. Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him [*to do him homage*].

3. When Herod the king had heard

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same custom continued in our Lord's time. John the Baptist's name seems to have been fixed upon in reference to the *mercy of God* (Luke i, 63—78); and that of Jesus in distinct allusion to his mission. So with Simon's after-name of Peter. St. Luke addresses his Gospel and the Acts to a person of the name of Theophilus or God-lover. The Donatists, in the fourth century after Christ, assumed the names of Deodatus (given-by-God); Deogratias (thanks-to-God); and Habetdeum (has-God); as some of the English Puritans in the seventeenth century were called God's-gift, Praise-God, and God-be-here. So, among the Germans, one of the most favorite names is Gottlieb, or God-love. The name Emmanuel, therefore, applied to Christ in the text, was intended to convey the fact, that God was specially with us in Christ.

CHAPTER II.

1. *Bethlehem of Judæa.* A village situated in the territory of Judah, about six miles south of Jerusalem. The ancient name of it seems to have been Ephrath, or Ephratah (Gen. xxxv, 19). It afterwards took the name of Bethlehem—unless, indeed, Ephrath was the district or thousand, and Bethlehem a village in it—and is called by Micah (v, 2) Bethlehem Ephratah. It was more commonly known as Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah, in Judæa, to distinguish it from Bethlehem of the tribe of Zebulun, in Galilee, mentioned Joshua xix, 15, 16. David's family were of Bethlehem in Judæa (I Sam. xvii, 12); and when David himself was lying parched with thirst near its gates, he remembered the sweet refreshment of its waters, and exclaimed, "Oh! that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate:" on which his three knights started to obtain their leader his desire, fought their way through the host of the Philistines, and brought him of the water; but David refused to drink of what was procured at such risk, and made an offering of it to God. See the interesting account in II Sam. xxiii, 13—17, reminding us of the magnanimity of Alexander the Great under somewhat similar circumstances.

Wise men from the East. Magi from Arabia or Persia. The Magi were men who devoted their lives to the study of philosophy, religion, medicine, and astronomy. Suetonius says, in his life of Vespasian, that "an ancient and fixed opinion had spread throughout the whole of the East, that it was destined that at that time persons proceeding from Judæa should achieve great empire;" and to the existence of some similar expectation several other writers bear testimony. The Magi, in their observation of heavenly appearances, regarded some particular phenomenon that now shewed itself, as indicating that the fulfilment of this expectation was at hand; and their interpretation of the appearance led them to Jerusalem as the place near which the future Prince would be born, and where they betook themselves to offer him their loyal homage.

2. *Worship him.* This word is employed in the New Testament in two senses. One higher, and referring to God; the other lower, and referring to men. It is used in the first sense in John iv, 2, 3, where the true worshippers are said to worship the Father in spirit and in truth; and in I Cor. xiv, 25. It is used in the second sense in Matth. xviii, 26, where the servant is said to have fallen down and *worshipped* his master, saying "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;" and Acts x, 25, where Cornelius *worships* Peter. We have remains among ourselves of the same use of the word in the titles *worship* and *worshipful* applied to magistrates. In the East it was usually accompanied with prostration of the body, and implied the homage which an inferior pays to a superior. It did not, and, as we have seen, could not, always mean *religious* worship Another word (sebomai) was commonly used for this purpose.

Herod's fears.

these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them, where Christ should be born.

5. And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judæa; for thus it is written by the prophet,

6. And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men [*the Magi*], enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child [*enquire diligently concerning the young child*]; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him [*do him homage*] also.

9. When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

Adoration of the Magi and flight of Joseph.

10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11. ¶ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped [*did homage to*] him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12. And being warned of God in a dream, that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15. And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, out of Egypt have I called my son.

16. ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that

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3. *He was troubled.* Herod was himself an Idumæan by descent, and sustained in power by the Romans, and he feared in any descendant from David and the ancient line of Jewish princes, about whom there might be a strong national interest, a rival to his own throne.

5. *The Prophet.* Micah, v. 2, where "the thousands of Judah" is in allusion to the divisions of the tribe, as England is divided into "hundreds." Thus, Samuel says to the people (I Sam. x, 19), "Now, therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands."

11. *They presented unto him gifts.* Princes and persons of importance were usually approached with presents: thus, Joseph by his brethren, Gen. xliii, 11, 12; Solomon by the Queen of Sheba, I Kings x, 2. *Frankincense.* Gum from an Indian and Arabic tree. It is semi-transparent and yellowish, and bitter to the taste. When burnt it sends forth a strong aromatic odour, on which account it was much employed in the ancient temples, and still continues to be used in Catholic churches. *Myrrh.* A fragrant and bitter gum-resin from Arabia and Abyssinia. It is used for embalming the dead (see John xix, 39), and for medical purposes.

13. *Egypt.* Alexandria, at this time the most frequented and important of Egyptian cities, was founded by Alexander the Great, about 330 years B.C., and was a place of refuge for Jews and any other people, who went there on account of its great commercial advantages, or in order to escape persecution at home. The Jews had peculiar privileges, enjoying their own law, governor, and separate portion of the city; the last, which afterwards became a restriction in European cities, being, in Alexandria, a privilege.

16. *Slew all the children.* Herod the Great was notorious for his unbounded cruelty. He put to death his beloved wife, Mariamne, from unjust jealousy; her mother, Alexandria; his three sons, Alexander, Aristobulus,

he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts [*confines*] thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18. In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19. ¶ But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20. Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding [*but*] being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

23. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.[a]

CHAPTER III.

IN those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa,[b]

[a] Luke ii, 39.

[b] Mark i, 4. Luke iii, 3. John i, 28.

and Antipater; so that Augustus said it was better to be Herod's hog than his son. Josephus also declares, that as his death was approaching he summoned the chief persons among the Jews to Jericho, and causing them to be shut up in the circus, he gave strict orders to his sister Salome to have them massacred at his death, that every great family might weep for him: this savage order, however, was not executed.

18. *Rama—Rachel.* Jeremiah xxxi, 15, where the prophet represents, by a strong poetical figure, Rachel, the ancestress of the Benjamites, as lamenting over the departure of her posterity into captivity; and the beautiful and pathetic language occurs to the memory of the Evangelist as illustrative of the incident he is recording. *Ramah* was not far from Bethlehem, so that there was the additional association of place.

19. *When Herod was dead.* The following is from Mr. Milman's impressive description of his last illness and death, abbreviated from Josephus:—"But now the disorder of the king made sensible progress; a slow fire seemed creeping through all his vital parts; he had a rabid appetite, which he dared not gratify on account of internal ulcers (which bred worms, see Acts xii, 23) and dreadful pains. His breathing was difficult; and violent spasms, which seemed to give him unnatural strength, convulsed his frame. He sought relief from the warm bituminous baths of Calirrhoe, but returned to Jericho without improvement." "At length, just before his death, the ratification of the sentence against Antipater arrived from Rome. It found Herod in a paroxysm of torments so great that he had attempted to lay violent hands on himself. The rumour of his death induced Antipater to make a desperate attempt to bribe the keeper of his prison. This last offence was fatal. Herod just raised himself up in his bed to give the mandate for his execution, and then fell back, had only time once more to remodel his will; and thus, dispensing death on one hand and kingdoms on the other, expired."

23. *He shall be called a Nazarene.* As no such words are to be found in the writings of the Prophets which have come down to us, they must have occurred in some that are now lost, or been a common oral tradition. In most countries, especially in ancient times, there were some places which were the objects of great, and often unfounded, prejudice and contempt. Nazareth appears to have been one of these places in Palestine; how unreasonably, the fact that our Lord came forth from that village sufficiently shews.

CHAPTER III.

1. *The wilderness of Judæa.* A tract of country bordering on the River Jordan and the Dead Sea. It was a thinly populated and not much cultivated region. Wilderness is not used in the New Testament for Desert, for in Luke (xv, 4) it is employed to denote

John's preaching.

2. And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.[c]

4. And the same John had his

c Mark i, 3. Luke iii, 4. John i, 23.

a place where sheep might be sent for pasture; and this very region, in the time of Joshua, had what are called cities and villages in it. Joshua xv, 61, 62.

2. *Repent ye, &c.* The Messiah is coming, the power of God is about to be manifested, and his reign over our hearts to commence. Prepare the way by repenting and reforming. This is the first step still, for all who would enter into the kingdom of heaven, or worthily profess discipleship to Jesus. Regret for what is wrong precedes a desire for what is right; we must renounce Belial before we can serve Christ. When we read of *the kingdom of God*, or *the kingdom of heaven*, or *the Son of man coming in his kingdom*, the reign of Christ in our hearts is meant—the prevalence of love for him—the grateful acceptance of all his blessed promises, and the willing obedience to all his wise commands. In so far as these things are found in us, the kingdom of God is within us.

3. *Esaias*, or Isaiah: see Isai. xl, 3, and observe the difference between the two passages. After the return from the Babylonish captivity, and when the Jews began to settle in many other countries besides Palestine, the ancient Hebrew language ceased to be universally understood among them. The ordinary and only language of many came to be Greek. To these it became impossible to understand the Old Testament in its original tongue. A great desire was therefore felt for a translation, and especially at Alexandria, in Egypt, a city founded by the Grecian king, Alexander the Great, colonized by Greeks, and also extensively inhabited by Jews. A translation into Greek, first of the five books of Moses, and afterwards of the rest of the Old Testament, was made, therefore, at Alexandria, about 300 years before Christ: and as it is said to have been translated at the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus, one of the kings of Egypt, by seventy-two elders, it was called the Septuagint Version, or translation by the seventy. From this translation, much used in the time of our Lord, the writers in the New Testament often quoted; and their quotations, therefore, sometimes differ from the corresponding passages taken from our English version, because it was translated from the Hebrew, and theirs are quoted from the Greek. Sometimes, too, the spirit and meaning of a passage may be preserved in a quotation and the exact words not adhered to. This might readily be the case in times when copies of the scriptures were not so numerous as now, and could not so easily be referred to. In the passage quoted in the text, Isaiah was describing the return from the Babylonish captivity; but St. Matthew used it as also descriptive of John the Baptist's preparation for the Messiah.

Prepare ye the way, &c. The idea is taken from the practice of Eastern monarchs, who, in their expeditions, sent pioneers before them to prepare the way. Thus, Diodo'rus Si'culus, the celebrated historian, says, in his account of the march of Semi'ramis into Media, "In her march to Ecbatana, she came to the Zarcean mountains, which, extending many furlongs, and being full of craggy precipices and deep hollows, could not be passed without making a great compass about. Being, therefore, desirous of leaving an everlasting memorial of herself, as well as shortening the way, she ordered the precipices to be digged down, and the hollows to be filled up; and, at a great expense, she made a shorter and more expeditious road, which, to this day, is called, from her, the Road of Semi'ramis. Afterwards, she went into Persia, and all the other countries of Asia subject to her dominion; and, wherever she went, she ordered the mountains and precipices to be levelled, raised causeways in the plain country, and, at a great expense, made the ways passable."

4. *And the same John had his raiment, &c.* Though there was nothing of excessive rigour or sordidness in the Baptist's garb and mode of life, yet it was of such a plainness and simplicity as would connect him with those Prophets of old, whose long-interrupted line he came to take up; and it would serve the better to indicate the unworldliness and spirituality of that Messianic reign which he came to usher in. His clothing was made of the coarse hair of the camel, bound round his loins by a girdle of leather. Such was the dress of Elijah. ("He was an hairy man, girt with a girdle of leather about his loins," II Kings i, 8); and also of those who, in imitation of the prophets, deceitfully professed peculiar sanctity of life. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they

John's dress and food.

raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.[d]

5. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan,[e]

d Mark i, 6.

His rebuke of the Pharisees.

6. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7. ¶ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation [*offspring*] of vipers, who hath

e Mark i, 5.

wear a rough garment to deceive," Zechariah xiii, 4. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing," Mat. vii, 15. The insect *locust* was not unknown as a food among the Jews, to whom it was permitted, Levit. xi, 22; or among the Greeks. The *wild honey* of the text is to be distinguished from the honey made by bees: this exuded from trees.

5. *The region round about Jordan.* From both sides of the Jordan. All this shews the intense curiosity and interest of the people in reference to John's mission.

6. *Baptized.* Baptism was not a new thing in Judæa, for proselytes from other nations used to be baptized into the Jewish religion. But it was a new thing for Jews to be baptized; and by requiring this of *them*, John shewed that he thought that they had corrupted and disobeyed their own faith, and needed introduction into a better and purer. The purification of the body by water was regarded by heathen nations also as a sign and emblem of the purification of the soul from sin, and was sometimes mistaken by them for the thing itself, which it typified. Thus, Ovid says, "Ah! too easily satisfied are ye who think that mournful crimes of murder can be removed by the water of the stream."

7. *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come.* He did not think them sincere: he rebuked them, as coming either from hypocrisy or curiosity, and not in true and humble penitence for sin.

The origin of the Pharisaic sect is uncertain. They probably grew up gradually, but began to rank as a distinct religious and political body about 200 B.C. The name is usually derived from the Hebrew word *pharath* to separate, and a Pharisee thus would mean a *separatist*. Whether this name was assumed by themselves or given them by others cannot now be known; but as the Puritans in England were so called from their profession of a superior moral code, so the Pharisees, probably, were so called for a similar reason, namely, for their separating or distinguishing themselves from others by their greater attention to religious observances. They did not, however, on this account, hold themselves aloof from the common intercourses of life. On the contrary, they were a very numerous and a very popular body, and had a great hold both upon persons in power and on the common people. Their two distinguishing tenets in religion were, a scrupulous regard to the oral or traditional law of Moses, as well as to the written law or Pentateuch, and a belief in the resurrection of man after death. Their punctiliousness in outward observances led to much hypocrisy among them, and was often made a cloak for the worst vices. It is in this aspect of their character that they are so often held up to us in the Gospels, and laden with heavy and indignant rebuke by our Saviour. We must not lose sight of the fact, however, that though this was the fatal tendency of their system, and the fatal result into which many fell, there must have been a large proportion of sincere and upright men among them. The bold friend of the apostles in the Council of Jerusalem (when the Sadducees had put them into prison. See Acts v, 17—40), Gamaliel, was a Pharisee; the well-meaning but timid Nicodemus (John iii) was a Pharisee; the Apostle Paul was a Pharisee; so was the historian of the Jewish nation, Josephus; and many Pharisees sought the society and instruction of our Lord, no doubt in sincerity and devotion. The Pharisaic type of character, however, as exhibited in the Gospels, is that of men careful about little forms and indifferent about great duties, committing serious crimes against their fellow-men, and for a pretence making long prayers to God. This character, in whatever age, is the most detestable and the most hopeless on which the eye of religion can rest.

Sadducees. Nearly contemporaneously with the Pharisees arose another body, designed as a counterpart or check to the Pharisaic party. The Sadducees took their name from Sadoc, who is said to have carried out the opinion expressed by his master, Antigonus of Sochos (that we should not serve God for the sake of reward) into a denial of any future state of rewards and punishments, and thence into a denial of any future life at all. The Sadducees rejected the mass of traditions with which the Pharisees overlaid the Mosaic law, and adhered only to the written books of Scripture. They were stricter in their morals than the Pha-

Discourse to the Pharisees and Sadducees.

warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

9. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to [*for*] *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10. And now also [*even now*] the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.[f]

11. I indeed baptize you with [*in*] water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost [*in the holy spirit*] and *with* [*in*] fire:[g]

12. Whose fan *is* in his hand, and

f Luke iii, 7—9.

g Mark i, 7, 8. Luke iii, 16. John i, 26, 27.

risees, but had less of religious profession and outward devotional habit. They were not numerous or popular, but were distinguished for their rank and wealth, and their frequent occupation of office, in which last capacity they were said to make severe judges. This severity is accounted for by the further tenet which they held, of the freedom of the human will; whereas the Pharisees were necessarians. The Pharisaic vices were hypocrisy and superstition—the Saddusaic, hardness and unbelief. Both sects were worldly and conforming. But the Pharisaic system contained the elements of a higher spiritual life: whereas the Saddusaic could seldom raise its followers above the level of a respectable materialism. The Pharisaic system gave rise to greater excellences and greater defects: the Saddusaic had no pretences to protect them in the indulgence of lower qualities, and no spiritual faith, no hopes and fears of things unseen, to lead them to the enjoyment of higher. These two systems of opinion and forms of character exist in all ages.

8. *Bring forth fruits*, &c. This is now, as then, essential to the possession of the peace and joy of righteousness, and to the avoidance of the misery and punishment of sin. As the Jews of old relied on the righteousness of Abraham as the ground of their salvation as his children, so now many Christians rely upon our blessed Master as a substitute for their own goodness, instead of seeking to form him within themselves, reproducing his spirit in their hearts. But there can be no surer truth than this, that "personal piety is the inextinguishable need of every child of God."

11. *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.* Or, as St. Mark expresses it, "the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." The sandal worn in the East was a sole for the bottom of the foot, bound about the foot and ankle with a leathern strap. The foot was thus much exposed, and it was customary on entering the house after a walk or journey to unloose the sandal and wash the feet. To put on and to take off the sandal was the office of the lowest servant. It was this office that the Baptist, in the enthusiasm of his reverence and humility, says he was unworthy to bear to the coming Messiah.

With the Holy Spirit and with fire. "*Water* is the symbol of *my* office," says John, "but the power of him who is coming after me may be signified by far subtler and more searching elements, "wind and fire." This appears from the connexion: for he instantly likens his successor to a husbandman, prepared with his fan to blow the chaff out of the wheat and with fire to consume it. The material husbandman employed for his work the winds and the fan of earth: the spiritual husbandman employed the spirit and the power of God.

12. *Whose fan.* "Not *fan*, according to the original word, but *winnowing shovel*, with which the grain when threshed was tossed up in the wind, and the chaff and kernel thus separated. The fan or van was more complex. It was designed, by means of sails, to raise an artificial wind, and was not an implement that could be carried in the hand."

Thoroughly purge his floor. "An eastern threshing-floor was not made as ours with planks and boards, but consisted of an elevated circular area, formed in the field by smoothing and hardening the soil with a cylinder. On this the unthreshed grain was placed, to be beaten with flails, trodden by oxen, or bruised by a heavy kind of sledge drawn by cattle." The straw was then removed, and the grain flung up in the wind, which caught away the chaff, till the *floor* was *thoroughly purged*, and the grain alone left on it. Lest by a change of the wind the chaff and broken straw should be again blown upon

he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

13. ¶ Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.[l]

14. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15. And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:[m]

17. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

l Mark i, 9. Luke iii, 21.

m Mark i, 10. John i, 32. Luke iii, 22.

the floor, fire was applied, which, commencing on the windward side, crept on and consumed all before it went out. "This made an unquenchable fire; it burnt until it had done its office." Various indications of these customs appear in the scriptures. Boaz "winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor," Ruth iii, 2. "Clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan," Isaiah xxx, 24. "Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them," Isai. xli, 15, 16. "For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble," Mal. iv, 1. Thus Christ, the Baptist declares, would come in the searching power and purity of his religion into the midst of this world's moral good and evil, gathering the one into the garner of his preservation, and visiting the other with consuming destruction.

13. *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee.* From his usual place of residence, Nazareth. See Luke ii, 51; and Mark i, 9. The Baptist was now at Bethabara, on the eastern bank of the Jordan (John i, 28); afterwards he was at Ænon, on the western bank. John iii, 23.

14. *I have need to be baptized of thee.* This was John's tribute of reverence to the character of Jesus, who, however, he did not yet know was himself the Messiah. John i, 31. It is pleasant to reflect upon the childhood and youth of Jesus and John as spent together in mutual love and esteem; each, as he grew up, knowing the hopes that were conceived of the other, but neither knowing, until the appointed time of the Lord, what were the important offices they were afterwards to sustain. The families were connected by blood and friendship, and the painters of the Christian Church have never been weary of depicting the scenes of their domestic life, in which the two children generally form a beautiful and prominent part.

15. *Suffer it to be so now.* Although designed and trained by the providence of God for the office of Messiah, it does not appear, from the Gospel narratives, that Jesus at this period certainly knew himself to be the destined Redeemer, and therefore he desired to be baptized into the common hope of the coming Messiah. Whether this were so or not, however, it shews the personal humility of our Lord, that he desired to submit to the rite which John administered, and thus to comply with one of those outward forms of religion which are among the means and the signs of a true devotion. In the same spirit he frequented the synagogue of his native village. Luke iv, 16. The highest and best souls are ever the humblest, and most disposed to treat the sacred truths and offices of religion with reverence.

16. *The Spirit of God descending like a dove.* Whether the appearance were, as St. Luke intimates, "in bodily shape like a dove," or whether the resemblance was merely in the gentle, hovering, dove-like motion of the descent—the dove was a fit emblem, in its gentleness and meekness, of the love and benignity, the humility and holiness, of him, on whose brow the duty of recovering and saving a sinful world now rested. The symbol, however, entirely derives its beauty from the associations of the qualities of the dove, and it is in too literal a spirit that Christian art has made so prominent the bodily form.

17. *My beloved Son.* We are all the sons or children of God: as the Apostle John says, "Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God." But Jesus is the *beloved Son of God:* and as an only child in the families of earth is

The temptation of Jesus.

CHAPTER IV.

THEN was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.[a]

[a] Mark i, 12. Luke iv, 1.

2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

3. And when the tempter came to

viewed with a concentrated affection by its parents, so the expression "only-begotten" or "only" Son of God is applied to Jesus Christ, to express in human language the peculiar love which the Almighty bears to him. And again, as in our homes of earth that son who is most willing to serve his parents, most kindly and considerate in his intercourse with those about him, is the best beloved of all—so of all beings, the blessed Jesus—being the most obedient and submissive to the will of his heavenly Father, most nearly united to Him, most gifted with all spiritual powers and graces, and most devoted in his love to God's creatures—becomes in an especial and peculiar manner the "beloved Son" of God.

CHAPTER IV.

1. *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit.* The same spirit that inspired and consecrated him for the work drew him into a place of solitary meditation, after the baptism, there to complete his preparation for the solemn mission on which he was about to enter.

To be tempted of the devil. One of the great spiritual benefits accruing to us from the mission of our Lord, is, that we find in him a Forerunner in all the great experiences of earthly discipline. It is said in the Scriptures, that "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps:" and that "we have not an high Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." And so, it would appear from the commencement of the present chapter, that, in the very earliest days of his separation for the Messianic office, Christ passed through several of those temptations, by which his spiritual strength was tested, and his preparation for that office perfected. First of all, he was tempted to exert the high powers with which he was invested for a selfish purpose, and for the satisfaction of a mere bodily appetite: secondly, he was tempted to commence his public ministry by an act of ostentation, and to test, by a reckless experiment, the perfectness of God's guardian care over his life: and, thirdly, he was tempted to employ worldly means for the establishment of a worldly power, and thus to bring back, in a material and political sense, the kingdom unto Israel. He overcame all these temptations, and at the same time established the principles on which a truly divine life was to be sustained in the soul. He shewed, first of all, that the highest gifts of God were not those which nourished the body, but those which nourished the soul, and that the highest life consisted not in meat and drink, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. He shewed next, that we should exhibit our faith in God's preserving and providential care, not by overweening and ostentatious experiments of the extent of his mercy, but by quiet humble trust in its sufficiency for all necessary trial and duty. And he shewed, thirdly, that the true kingdom of Christ consisted not in outward secular sway—not in the growth in wealth or power of sect, or party or nation, but in the erection of the throne of Christ, the rule of Christian love, obedience, and faith, in all human hearts. In this, as in many other passages of the Messiah's spiritual history, we trace the steps of our own Forerunner. For how often are we also tempted to devote our first powers and wishes to the satisfaction of the wants of our bodily condition, forgetting that man liveth not by bread alone: how often, by placing ourselves in situations of great peril and temptation, to risk our virtue and tempt the Lord our God: how often to seek our highest good in the efforts of a worldly ambition, and let truth, and honour, and kindness, and all true dignity of character, be sacrificed to the worship of the god of this world!

A much less important, though a much more debated, question has arisen in reference to our Lord's temptation, namely, the question whether it proceeded from within or from without; from some powerful evil spirit, personally visiting our Lord in order to tempt him, or from the conflict of his own thoughts and purposes. Believing in the strict truth of the words of the Prophet, "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things" (Isaiah xlv, 7); we cannot suppose that any erratic, lawless spirit of evil, careers through the dominions of God's providence like a comet, alarming the nations with the lurid light of his hostility, and thwarting the rule of the One Supreme. These temptations of Christ came as those of his followers come, from without, from the

The temptation of Jesus.

him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.[b]

5. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.[c]

7. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.[d]

8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence [*behind me*], Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.[e]

11. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.[f]

12. ¶ Now, when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;[g]

13. And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is

b Deut. viii, 3. *c* Psalm xci, 11, 12. *d* Deut. vi, 16.

e Deut. vi, 13. *f* Mar. i, 13. *g* Mar. i, 14. Lu. iv, 14.

material condition of things in which we are placed (the evil of which is here, according to early oriental usages, still preserved among us, personated under the name of "The Devil"), but the conflict was sustained entirely within and between the antagonistic forces of which the Apostle speaks as producing "a war in our members," and which reside in different proportions in every breast. By the grace of God, and by the effort of his own earnest and disciplined spirit, our Lord was victorious over these temptations, and in this hath left us an example that we should follow his steps, for, having been tempted, "he is able to succour those that are tempted."

2. *Fasted forty days and forty nights.* Intense and solemn thought occasions for the time an oblivion of the wants of the body. It has been a practice with religious men of all ages to promote this abstraction of mind by the avoidance of every thing that can pamper the body, cherish or call attention to its wants. In this spirit and with this view our Lord "fasted" for forty days and forty nights. "Fasting" is the practice of abstaining partially or entirely from bodily sustenance. When for a short time, a portion or the whole of a day, the abstinence is frequently total; when for a longer period, as several days, a fortnight, a month, the abstinence is from every thing but what is barely sufficient to sustain the body in life. In this sense John the Baptist was said to come "neither eating nor drinking," because he lived on such slight sustenance as "locusts and wild honey." The word is used in the same sense among us now; indeed, to abstain simply from flesh meat, is called by many Christians "fasting."

11. *Angels came and ministered unto him.* "When the great struggle was over, and the tempter had fled, and the bosom of Jesus, no longer darkened by evil shadows, was filled with the serene triumph of moral victory and endowed with new force, wrought out by the recent strife, then the ineffable light of God, beaming within, irradiated every thing around him; and the desert smiled, and the sun grew brighter in the heavens, and grace and beauty invested the meanest things," until his soul "overflowed with the divine presence and spirit."

12. *He departed into Galilee.* In order that he might pursue his course unmolested by the interference of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were most numerous and powerful in the south, and especially in Jerusalem. He used John's imprisonment as a warning to himself.

13. *And leaving Nazareth,* where he was injuriously treated after preaching in the synagogue: see Luke iv, 16—30. *Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast.* The Scriptures speak of any considerable body of water as a *sea.* The *sea-coast* here was the western bank of the Lake of Galilee or Sea of Tiberias (sometimes called also the Lake of Genne-

upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

14. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

15. The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

16. The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

17. ¶ From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.[h]

18. ¶ And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

20. And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.[i]

21. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.[j]

23. ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom [*proclaiming the glad tidings of*

h Mark i, 15.

i Mark i, 16—18. *j* Mark i, 19, 20.

sareth). *In the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim,* in the territory allotted, under the ancient division of the country in the time of Joshua, to the tribes of Zebulon and Naphthali.

15. *By the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:* i. e., in the direction of the Lake, by the side of Jordan, the portion of the country called Galilee of the Gentiles, to distinguish it from the southern part of Galilee; and so called, because a great part of the population was sprung from *foreign* or *gentile* stocks—Egyptians, Arabians, and Phœnicians. This mixture of stocks may, perhaps, be in part traced to the transfer of the twenty cities made by Solomon to Hiram: see I Kings, ix, 11—13.

18. *The sea of Galilee,* on the borders and on the bosom of which so many of the days of our Lord's ministry and of the Apostles' lives were passed, must, in consequence, be one of the most interesting localities in the Holy Land. It was between seventeen and eighteen miles in length, and from five to six in breadth. It lies in a deep basin, and the hills inclose it on all sides, except only the narrow passages by which the Jordan enters it and passes out of it. The water is as clear as the purest crystal, sweet, cool, and most refreshing to the taste. As in the time of our Lord, so now, the lake still abounds in a great variety of excellent fish; but, from the poverty, the indolence, and the ignorance of the people who now live upon its borders, there is not a boat or raft, either large or small, throughout its whole extent. Some years since a boat did exist there, but, being broken up from decay, it has never been replaced; so that the few fish which are now and then taken are caught by lines from the shore, nets never being used. The bounty of Providence, thus neglected by man, is left for the vast flocks of storks and diving birds which frequent the borders.

Simon, afterwards called *Peter,* or *rock:* the Hebrew word corresponding to this, and by which Simon was also sometimes called, was *Cephas:* see Matth. xvi, 18; John i, 42; I Cor. i, 12; and several times in the same Epistle, and also in that to the Galatians.

19. *Fishers of men.* You shall draw *men* into the net of Gospel truth, and thus, instead of ministering to the humblest wants of the body, shall supply the highest needs of the soul.

James, the elder, afterwards slain by Herod, Acts xii, 1, 2. There was another James among the Apostles, the son of Alpheus.

21. *John his brother.* This was the Evangelist of that name. *In a ship,* or, as we should express it, *boat,* used for spreading their nets out into the water, and bringing to shore the hawser or rope of the farther end, by which the net was pulled to land.

23. *Teaching in their synagogues.* A synagogue signifies, properly, an *assembly;* but, in time, it came, like our English word church, to mean the building in which such assemblies were held. These were erected in every considerable town in Judæa, and even in foreign countries, where there were many Jews. They assembled in these syna-

the kingdom], and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.[k]

24. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy [*dæmoniacs, and lunatics and paralytics*]; and he healed them.

[k] Mark i, 39. Luke iv, 15—44.

gogues every Sabbath-day (Saturday), to hear the law and the prophets read and explained by the scribes, who were officers appointed for that purpose by the rulers of the synagogue. There is no reason for surprise that Christ was allowed to speak in the synagogues; for it appears that, after the ordinary service was finished, this was an honour usually offered by the rulers of the synagogue to any person of grave deportment and competent knowledge. When Paul and his company went on the Sabbath-day into the synagogue of Antioch, and sat down, after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on:" Acts xiii, 15. It is uncertain when synagogues first arose; but there are no clear indications of their existence until after the Babylonish captivity, which ended about 530 B.C. To the absence of synagogues and periodic meetings for devotion and religious instruction is attributed the frequent lapses of the people into some one or other of the surrounding idolatries; and to their establishment, after the Captivity, the firmness and conscientiousness with which the Jews adhered to the worship of the God of their fathers. The synagogue service appears to have furnished the model of our Christian service, and to have consisted of prayer, reading of the scriptures, and exhortation. There was a large number of synagogues in Jerusalem (it has been said, as many as 460), many of them for the accommodation of Jews of particular nations and languages, visiting Jerusalem at the feasts, or on business: thus, in Acts (vi, 9), mention is made of the synagogues of the Libertini (probably from the city of Libertina in Africa), of the Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and Cilicians.

24. *Possessed with devils.* There is so strong a disposition in the human mind to trace every thing to some cause, that, where knowledge is insufficient to supply a real cause, it would rather rest quietly in a false one than assign none at all. The phenomena of nature offer many opportunities for the manifestation of this disposition, and, still more, the phenomena of life and disease. In the earlier ages of society there is always a peculiar tendency to the mistakes in this process, which arise from ignorance. To pass over the strange misinterpretations which have prevailed of the laws of the material creation, their causes and effects, it was long before human diseases were attributed to their genuine constitutional causes. Thus, a peculiar spasmodic disease of the muscles has obtained, and still retains among us, the appellation of St. Vitus's dance, because, it is said, in the seventeenth century, a belief prevailed among the people in Germany that by presenting gifts, and dancing before the image of St. Vitus, on his festival in May, they would live in health and safety during the ensuing year. For this purpose many would repair to this saint's chapel, and dance day and night, till they were seized with a delirium, and fell down in a sort of trance. The peculiar restless motion of the patient under this disease took, probably, its name from this resemblance. So, a terrible disease of the middle ages, which dried up and blackened every limb which it attacked, as if it were burnt, was called St. Anthony's fire, from the supposed efficacy of that saint and his relics to cure it. A person labouring under mental derangement was, and is still, called a lunatic, under the idea that the changes of the moon created certain corresponding changes on the mind; though modern science cannot trace the existence of any such influence, and resolves these changes simply into periodicity, or the periodic conditions of the disease—except it be that, at the full moon, the greater quantity of light, if unexcluded from the chamber, aggravates the disease in some patients. In the same way the Hebrews had their superstitions, and, as appears from this verse, attributed insanity to devils taking possession of the human will; "which demons," says Josephus, "are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them." The insane themselves, as was to be expected, adopted the prevalent superstition, and often spoke of themselves as being the evil spirits by which they supposed themselves to be possessed; as insane people now often imagine themselves to be what they are not—kings, princes,

The Sermon on the Mount.

25. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judæa, and *from* beyond Jordan.

CHAPTER V.

AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

2. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,[a]

3. Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4. Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5. Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth [*the land*].

a Luke vi, 20.

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glass vessels, or even the Messiah. That the demoniacs of the New Testament were of this description is evident from their dislike to wearing clothes, their love of living in by-places, and wandering about; their recklessness in attacking persons, their sudden fits of convulsion, and their fixed idea of being somebody, or something different from themselves; and therefore St. Luke naturally speaks of those who were cured of their disease, or supposed possession, as *sitting, clothed,* and *in their right mind:* Luke viii, 35. Our Lord and the Apostles employed, of course, the ordinary language of the time, as we do when we say a man is a lunatic, or the sun rises and sets. *Lunatic,* in the Scriptures, means, perhaps, rather an *epileptic.*

25. *Decapolis,* or the region of the ten cities, among which were Gadara, Pella, and Gerasa. Not long since a district of this kind in England was indicated by the existence of a newspaper called "The *Ten Towns'* Messenger."

CHAPTER V.

1. *He went up into a mountain.* The site of which it has been attempted to identify with a lofty hill between Tiberias and Nazareth, which is called Keroun Hottain, "the horns of Hottain," from its shape, and which the Christians of the country designate as "The Mount of Beatitudes."—*When he was set.* Among the Jews, the teachers sat and the hearers stood: among us, usually the teacher stands and the hearers sit.—*His disciples came unto him.* His more immediate friends and followers might gather round him; but that the discourse was addressed to the multitude is evident from the beginning and from the end of the discourse, See v, 1, and vii, 28; and viii, 1.

3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit.* Jesus in this and the following verses points out the objects of his mission, and who they are whom he is going to lift up. The kingdom of heaven is not about to be composed of the proud, the prosperous, the ambitious, the tyrannical, the sensual, the warlike, and they of whom all men speak well; but, on the contrary, of the humble, the afflicted, the meek, the struggling, the merciful, the poor, the peaceful and the down-trodden. These are the persons to whom Christ would particularly address himself, to whom his message would indeed be glad tidings, who would be candidates for admission into his kingdom, and whom he would raise from their present sorrows, and by the truths he unfolded, and the hopes he extended to them, render *Blessed.* It was in reference to what the Gospel was about to effect among them that all the sorrowing were now pronounced Blessed: not in their capacity as the afflicted and the sunken, but in their capacity as the comforted and upraised. The passage receives its truest comment from the invitation in xi, 28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest.*" *The Beatitudes* are, in truth, a description, 1, of the objects and subjects of the new Dispensation; and, 2, of the modes in which that Dispensation will minister to them. The passage consists, then, of two series of correspondencies, the states of mind *for* the Gospel, and the corresponding influences *of* the Gospel. Thus (generally) *blessed are the poor in spirit,* the humble, *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* More particularly afterwards.

4. *Blessed are they that mourn,* for they now in the light which the Gospel throws over human life, in the faith of a Father-God, and of a home in heaven—*shall be comforted.*

5. *For they shall inherit the earth.* The Land. The early fathers of the Jewish people were consoled in their long wanderings by the vision of the Promised Land; the expression thus became familiar to the whole nation, as applicable to future good or joy in any form. Blessed were the meek, therefore, for they should inherit the Land now promised in the Gospel—the kingdom of heaven, or a home in that kingdom.

All the beatitudes that follow are but expansions of the main idea: blessed are the

6. Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7. Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8. Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9. Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10. Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

13. ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his [*its*] savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.[b]

14. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

[b] Mark ix, 50. Luke xiv, 34, 35.

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spiritually minded, for it is they that shall enter the kingdom of heaven.

6. *Blessed are they which do hunger, &c.* Those who have been craving for a greater knowledge of the truth, and for more righteousness in themselves and in the world, will now be satisfied.

7. *Blessed are the merciful.* Illustrated by that other expression of our Lord's, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." The merciful are usually also treated by their fellow-men with mercy, as the rigid with rigour.

8. *Blessed are the pure in heart, &c.* As in the old Dispensation only those who were cleansed and purified in their persons might enter the Temple or outward presence of God, so, in the new Dispensation, only those who were pure in their hearts could enter the spiritual presence of God. It is only the pure in heart who can see, understand, love, or be, as it were, in the *presence* of God.

9. *Blessed are the peacemakers.* Christ, *the Prince of Peace*, was the Son of God; the peacemakers, therefore, may well be *God's children.* We may make peace or war each day in our own homes and circles of acquaintance, by forbearance, kindness, and care, on the one hand; by unkindness, anger, and evil or incautious talking, on the other.

10. *Blessed are they which are persecuted, &c.* Their gain will be greater than their loss, their gladness than their woe. They may lose the good word of men, but they will have the approval of God. They may have trial without, but they shall have joy within. The peace of their days on earth may be destroyed, but their peace in the eternal ages shall be unbroken.

12. *The prophets that went before you.* Thus Elijah, pursued by Ahab, I Kings, xviii, 10; by Jezebel, I Kings, xix, 2, 3; Jeremiah, punished by Pashur, Jer. xx, 2; by Zedekiah, Jer. xxxii, 2, 3, xxxviii, 6. The persecutions of Daniel are still better known, Dan. vi, 16.

13. *Ye are the salt of the earth.* Or land-salt, a substance used as a manure for land. Thus Luke xiv, 34, 35: "Salt is good; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out." The common salt does not lose its saltness, except by chemical decomposition. This was most probably therefore some fertilizing substance, containing salt, and liable to lose its salt ingredients by exposure or otherwise, in which case the rest of the substance would only be fit to be cast out and trodden under feet of men. As salt, then, fertilizes and enriches the soil of the earth, so the true Christian will, by his doctrine and example, be the means of benefiting and blessing the soil of human life; and as salt which has lost this quality is thrown away as useless, so the Christian professor, who has no longer the salt of fruitfulness and wisdom in himself, ceases to be of service in rendering spiritual benefits to mankind. Our Lord, then, said to the early disciples, and through them to all his sincere followers in after-time, "You are to be the fertilizers and purifiers of the world: but if *you* become vapid, what means will there be of invigorating and fertilizing *you?*"—*To be trodden under foot.* Rock salt of a spoiled and vapid description, it is said, was laid on portions of the temple courts for walking on.

14. *Ye are the light of the world.* The Jews called their teachers "Lights of the world:" and it was the same idea, probably, that led the Greeks to call Athens "the eye

15. Neither do men light a candle [*a lamp*], and put it under a bushel [*under the measure*], but on a candlestick [*on the stand*]; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.[c]

16. Let your light so shine before men [*Thus let your light shine before men*], that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

17. ¶ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass [*away*], one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all [*things*] be fulfilled.[d]

19. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least [*one of the least of these*] commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21. ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by [*to*] them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

c Mark iv, 21. Luke viii, 15, 16. Luke xi, 33.

d Luke xvi, 17.

of the world." The Gospel is termed in the New Testament "a light to lighten the Gentiles," and our Lord himself is called "the Light."—*A city that is set on a hill*, &c. Probably there was one in view, to which the finger of our Lord was pointing.

15. *Under a bushel.* Lamps were used more at this time than candles, and sometimes, for purposes of concealment, were placed under the corn-measure.

16. *Let your light.* Let your conduct be like the lamp upon the stand, giving light and guidance to all that are within your household or the influence of your example. The evil conduct of no man can pass over without injurious effects upon the virtue and happiness of others; and the good conduct of none without a good effect. The *parent* is a city set on a hill to his family and household; the teacher to his pupils; the elder brother or sister to the younger; and the elder scholar or companion to the younger.

17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets.* Christ was the instrument, not of a *counter*, but of a *crowning* dispensation. Thus the law of Moses said, "Thou shalt not kill:" the law of Christ did not rescind this command, but carried it on to its entire spiritual fulfilment, by saying, "Thou shalt not even be *angry* with thy brother without a cause." The leadership of Moses was to an earthly land of promise, Christ's to a heavenly. Moses taught that there was one God, the Father of Abraham; Christ, that there was one, the Father of all mankind.

18. *One jot*—or, as we usually express it, iota. *Yod* was the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and iota of the Greek.—*Tittle*, the little turns which constituted the differences between many otherwise similar letters, or perhaps the ornaments appended to them. Nothing of the law shall pass away, till all the purposes it was to answer shall be accomplished.

19. *Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments.* So far was our Lord from annulling the moral law of Moses, that he reprobates the pernicious distinctions which many of the Jewish teachers of that law were raising between commandments of greater and commandments of less importance; often attaching to ceremonial disobedience the greatest guilt, and to moral disobedience none. Christ says, on the contrary, that he who shall call insignificant any, the least, of these commandments, and violate them in his own person, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

21. *Ye have heard that it was said by* [*or to*] *them of old time.* This does not necessarily mean the most ancient times of the Jewish nation. The word is used in Acts xv, 7: "Ye know how that a good while ago (literally, *from ancient days*) God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the Gospel and believe"—where the reference is to a comparatively recent occurrence. So, here, the allusion is not only to the law of Moses, but to additions, comments, or qualifications, introduced by more recent corrupters of the law.—*The judgment.* Probably the court, of which Josephus speaks, consisting of seven

22. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool [*Morè*], shall be in danger of hell fire [*of the gehenna of fire*].

23. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24. Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence,

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persons, and established in every city of Judæa, for the cognizance of offences, though with an appeal to a higher court. Writers posterior to the time of Christ speak of a court consisting of twenty-three.

22. *Angry with his brother.* In the beautiful religion of Christ all mankind are brethren. Some men have a miserable facility of being angry at every trifle, and are continually taking offence at their best friends. Such persons, our Lord says, are, according to the higher law of the gospel, subject to a disapprobation from God, parallel to that which the tribunal of the Judgment usually inflicted.—*Raca*, a word equivalent to *vain, worthless fellow.*—*The council.* The sanhedrim or council of seventy-two, six from each tribe. This was the highest tribunal among the Jews. They usually sat at Jerusalem, in a room near the temple. This was the court that condemned Christ, and tried the Apostles.—*Thou fool*, with a stronger meaning than *we* attach to the word—*impious wretch*—apostate from the faith.—*Shall be in danger of hell (or the gehenna of) fire.* The valley of Hinnom. One part of this was called *tophet*, or *fire-stove*, in which children are supposed to have been sacrificed to Moloch (see Leviticus xviii, 21). Hence the place was held in great abhorrence, and was made the receptacle of carcasses and refuse of all kinds. Fires were continually lighted to consume these, and the Hebrews adopted it as the image of future punishment, comparing God's displesaure to the burning flame of the valley of Hinnom. "Three degrees of anger are specified in these two verses, and three corresponding gradations of punishment, proportioned to the different degrees of guilt. Where these punishments will be inflicted our Lord does not say, he need not say. The man who indulges any wicked feelings against his brother man is in this world punished; his anger is the torture of his soul, and unless he repents of it, and forsakes it, it must prove its woe in all future stages of his being."

24. *Leave there thy gift before the altar.* The matter that usually prevented a Jew from making his offering was some blemish in the victim, or some outward uncleanness in himself. Our Lord passes over these points, so much insisted upon by the Pharisees, and calls attention to the state of the heart in the worshipper; *that* he should endeavour to render without spot of impurity, or blemish of ill-will, when he comes to make his offering before God.

25. *Agree with thine adversary quickly.* "Thine adversary" here means "thy creditor." Our Lord says, that a sensible man will, if he can, satisfy his creditor before he is delivered into the hands of the judge, *while he is on the way* to court: otherwise, the judge will sentence him to imprisonment until the whole debt be paid. According to the Roman law, a debtor could be arrested at any time, without previous writ or summons, by merely calling another person to bear witness to the seizure. This was done by the creditor holding the lower part of the ear of the witness (supposed to be the seat of memory), and saying, "Remember that you will be witness to me in this cause." The Latin poet, Horace, describes himself as being accompanied in a walk by a very troublesome and talkative companion who fastened himself upon him, and of whom he could not get rid, till the man's *adversary*, or creditor, met him, and called after him, with a loud voice, "Where are you going, scoundrel?" and, accosting the poet, said, "Will you be my witness?" Horace offers his ear, and the arrest is effected. Our Lord means, from this allusion to judicial matters, to recommend a disposition that is ready in all disputes for immediate arrangement and reconciliation.

till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

27. ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by [*to*] them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery;

28. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman [*wife*] to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29. And if thy right eye offend thee [*cause thee to offend*] pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell [*gehenna*].

30. And if thy right hand offend thee [*cause thee to offend*] cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell [*gehenna*].[e]

31. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32. But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.[f]

33. ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by [*to*] them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

35. Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

36. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

[e] Matthew xviii, 8, 9. Mark ix, 43—47.

[f] Matthew xix, 8, 9. Luke xvi, 18.

28. *To lust after her.* "Men, who can only judge by external actions, give the name of a crime merely to the last act; but, in the estimation of God, who searcheth the heart, he hath committed the crime who hath intended to do it, or hath wished it done." There is no kind of evil life which so leads on to other vices, which so blights all other virtues, and so deadens men's nobler nature, as a life of impure and criminal indulgence.

29. *Pluck it out.* If the loss of an eye, or the removal of a limb, would insure health to the whole body, it would be better to part with these than to retain them; and so, if the rooting out of a desire or a wish will remove disease from the soul, it is better to part with these than to retain them. Some foolish people, it is said, have taken these verses literally, and have maimed themselves. In such a case, they have, probably, lost their eye and kept their vice. They should have done the reverse, lost their vice and kept their eye.

31. *A writing of divorcement*, Deut. xxiv, 1. Our Lord held, with the stricter school of the Jews, that the sacred marriage contract should only be dissolved for unfaithfulness in the marriage relation; and that Moses had only allowed of divorce on lighter grounds in consideration of the hardness of their hearts: see Matth. xix, 7—9. When marriage is indissoluble, except in case of a criminal violation of its holiest bonds, persons enter upon it with greater caution, and put forth greater efforts to bear and forbear; the family and household, also, are brought up with a deeper sense of responsibility, with more stability and purity.

33. *Thou shalt not forswear thyself.* From Matthew xxiii, 16—22, we learn that the Pharisees were introducing subtle distinctions between various kinds of oaths, endeavouring to shew that some were more binding than others. Our Lord shews "that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein;" and that men, in fact, swear by the Lord whenever they swear by any thing that is his. But, although pointing out the folly of these distinctions, he proceeds to discountenance oath-taking altogether; and recommends the employment of simple affirmations or denials.

37. *Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay.* "The yea of the just is yea," said the Jewish proverb, "and their nay, nay;" and St. James puts the same injunction in equally solemn language (James v, 12.)

38. ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;

39. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil [or *the evil man*]: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation." There may be occasions when the magistrate, or person in other station of influence, may find it requisite, for the discovery of truth and the security of society, to remind those who are giving evidence of the solemn presence in which they are standing, and to require from them a declaration that they feel and acknowledge that the eye of God is upon them, and his ear open to their words. Thus, the high priest says to our Lord, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God," Matth. xxvi, 63; and our Lord replies to this adjuration. Again, there may be occasions when a person wishes himself to give assurance that he is conscious of his responsibility to God in the words which he is uttering. Thus, the Apostle Paul says (Rom. i, 9), "God is my witness that I make mention of you always in my prayers." And again (Gal. i, 20), "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." We cannot, therefore, assert that it is in all cases immoral to give or to require this solemn attestation; but we may certainly affirm that the frequent and common use of such attestations destroys their sanctity, leads to the disregard of truth in common speech, and to perjury on more important occasions; and not only comes of evil, but leads to evil. Our Lord, if he does not absolutely forbid their use on any occasion, discourages them on all, and it should be the effort of a Christian community gradually to dispense with them. If a person bearing evidence appears to be ignorant of the importance of truth, or careless of the correctness of his testimony, the magistrate or acting officer may with propriety solemnly remind him of the great presence in which he stands, and the responsibility under which he rests, "to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth:" but this may be done without the objectionable formality of an oath. To enforce an oath on persons who conscientiously object to it as a thing forbidden, is unjust and oppressive. If these injunctions of our Lord discourage the use of oaths even on solemn occasions, much more do they discountenance that low and wicked habit in which vulgar and irreligious persons indulge, of profane swearing. This habit always indicates a foolish weakness, an ungoverned temper, a vulgar mind, or an impious and atheistic disposition.

38. *An eye for an eye.* Reference is here made to the law laid down in different passages of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. "If any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe," Exodus xxi, 23—25. Similar to this, though not so equitable or impartial, is the law of Solon, "If any person destroy one eye of a wealthy man, he shall be deprived of both of his." It was a concession to the "hardness" of men's hearts, and yet as some check on the passion of revenge, that Moses, allowing the principle of retaliation, yet placed restrictions on it. In after-times the punishment, by the consent of the injured party, was usually changed into a fine. It is said that the Jewish doctors were recommending the private execution of these laws of retaliation by the injured parties themselves without the intervention of a magistrate; and that it was against this abuse, fostering as it did private and irresponsible vengeance, that our Lord particularly remonstrates.

39. *Resist not evil.* That is, "offer no retaliation whatever:" or, as the word *resist* (antistènai) might be rendered in full, "stand not up in return against" the evil-doer. "So far from retaliating the wrong upon him, let him rather repeat it upon you." There are few cases, if any, in which the spirit of our Lord's command, when exhibited in action, has not tended to repress rather than to invite the repetition of injury. When the noble Grecian said to his angry, threatening opponent, "strike," he disarmed him. And, if we acted on our Lord's principle, we should probably find, in nine cases out of ten, that the hand which had committed the first offence had become powerless to commit the second; and that the bitterest punishment of past violence, and the most efficient protection against its recurrence, is the meekness of unretaliating forgiveness. There is a fanatical interpretation of this text, which implies that we should not even seek to *protect* ourselves against evil. This makes folly

40. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke also.

41. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43. ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:

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of wisdom. The over-literalness of our western mind would thus drive all sober meaning out of the striking forms of eastern speech. The spirit of our Lord's commands is always best interpreted by his conduct. When struck by the ruffian's palm in the high priest's court, he did not offer himself for a repetition of the insult—he did not even unresistingly acquiesce in it. He did not, on the other hand, in the slightest way *retaliate* or *return* the evil; but he remonstrated with the wrong-doer upon its injustice. See John xviii, 22, 23.

40. *And take away thy coat.* The Jewish dress consisted of a close under garment, which covered the body, here called the *coat;* and of a long flowing outer garment or gown, which is here called a cloak, and was the more valuable of the two. Rather than follow the litigious man to the civil courts to save thy coat, sacrifice something even more valuable, and let him have thy cloak.

41. *Shall compel thee to go a mile.* The word in the original used to express "compel thee to go," is of Persian origin, and thence introduced into the Greek, Roman and Jewish languages. Cyrus, King of Persia, in order to secure the more speedy transmission of orders or information between the various seats of government in his empire, placed couriers at different stations. Each of these bore the commands brought to him to the next station, and then returned to his own post, ready to execute any fresh commission that might be sent him. The successors of Cyrus continued this practice, and these royal couriers had authority to claim the use of any men, horses, carriages, or ships, for which they might have occasion in the course of their journies. Our Saviour takes this special exaction of service, and draws from it a general rule of conduct. As you would not resist the demands of the imperial messenger on the public service, but, rather than do so, would go with him double the distance required, so in your private social life do *more* than the law or strict right demands of you, rather than *less.*

42. *Give to him that asketh thee, &c.* Here again, in a different form, a humane, considerate, forbearing, and benevolent disposition is inculcated. There are cases of need, when our neighbour asks our assistance, and when it is our duty to give of what we have; there are cases when a loan would be of great service to him, and relieve him from much distress, and when it is the part of kindness not to turn away. Every true-hearted Christian admits these facts, and acknowledges these obligations. But it does not, of course, follow that we are to give when giving would do no real good; or lend, when lending would be no real benefit to the borrower. Such acts may often only tend to foster idleness and improvidence, or, by relieving men from the natural and temporary inconvenience arising from their own folly, encourage them to plunge into fresh and deeper difficulties, from which they may never be able to extricate themselves.

43. *Hate thine enemy.* This was not said in the law of Moses; it, on the contrary, commanded, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help him." Exod. xxiii, 4, 5.

44. *Love your enemies, &c.* Not in the same sense as that in which we love our friends. Jesus himself did not love Judas, who betrayed him, in the same sense as that in which he loved John, who leaned upon his bosom. The difficult but true and affecting lesson here taught us, is to preserve such feelings towards those who have injured us that we may be ready to forgive them, and, if opportunity offers, to be of service to them. The best means for the nurture of such feelings is to make the injurious person the subject of our prayer to God. In this solemn presence our hearts will be softened, perhaps even into compassion, and our subsequent conduct may turn our enemy into a friend.

45. *Sendeth rain.* A necessary blessing

for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans [*the tax-gatherers*] the same?

47. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others?* do not even the publicans [*the heathen*] so?

48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

CHAPTER VI.

TAKE heed that ye do not your alms [*your acts of righteousness*] before men [*in order*] to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

2. Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4. That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

5. ¶ And when thou prayest, thou

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in all countries, but especially longed-for and valued in the hotter climates.

46. *The publicans.* The collectors of the public revenue. The tax-gatherer is seldom a welcome visitor in any country; but in Judæa he was especially obnoxious, because he collected, not for a native, but for a foreign power; and the patriotic feelings of the nation revolted against the idea of the children of Abraham being in bondage to any man. The farming of the taxes was generally in the hands of the Roman nobility, and particularly of the knights; but practically the odium fell upon the subordinate officers who stood at the entrance of the cities, or on the banks of the lakes or rivers, to exact toll upon the passage of goods. This accounts for the loathing with which this class of men were regarded by the Jews, and for their being conjoined in the New Testament with *sinners.*

48. *Perfect.* Be equally *complete* in the comprehensiveness of your benevolence. We cannot reach the *perfection* of God; but we may imitate the *completeness* of his mercy.

CHAPTER VI.

1. *To be seen of them.* When religious services are engaged in, when acts of kindness or charity are performed, or any duties discharged, with the object of gaining the praise and approbation of the world, they lose all their moral worth in the sight of God, and are changed into deeds of ostentation, vanity, or ambition.

2. *Sound a trumpet.* We use a similar expression when we say of great promises, or ostentatious performances, that those concerned in them "make a great flourish of trumpets." Whether the expression is purely metaphorical, or originated in some actual custom, it is not easy to decide; but, most probably, it has arisen from some actual practice; for the eastern dervishes "carry horns with them, which they frequently blow, when any thing is given to them, in honour of the donor." A Birman convert, reading the Sermon on the Mount, exclaimed, "How unlike our religion is this! When Birmans make offerings at the pagodas, they make a great noise with drums and musical instruments, that others may see how good they are."

3. *Let not thy left hand know.* The alms-box was placed on the *right* hand of the passage into the synagogue: "hence the peculiar force and beauty of saying, that the left hand should not know of the alms which the right hand bestowed."

4. *That thine alms may be in secret.* Our Saviour here condemns not so much *actual* publicity as a *desire* of publicity. He forbids that any act of beneficence whatever should be performed in order to obtain glory of men. But he does not forbid that such acts should, at times, be public; for this is frequently necessary, in order that the influence of example may have its due weight; nor is it possible, in many cases, to do good effectually without doing it publicly. Nothing, however, but the necessity of the case can justify publicity; and he who is not satisfied with having done the deed of kindness, but secretly desires that it shall be known to others, has done the deed unto men, and not unto God.

5. *In the synagogues and in the corners of the streets.* The Jews had certain daily fixed hours of private prayer, and wherever they

shalt not be as the hypocrites *are:* for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do:* for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.[a]

10. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

11. Give us this day our daily bread.

[a] Luke xi, 2, &c.

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were at these times their prayer was to be offered. Hypocrites and ostentatious religionists contrived often to be found in places of public resort at such times, and thus attracted the attention of the world to their private prayers. This practice our Saviour denounces, and afterwards beautifully and impressively describes the nature and spirit of private prayer (v. 6.)

6. *Enter into thy closet, &c.* Prayer offered in our individual capacity cannot be too private. Where it is possible, no eye but God's should be upon us. Our Lord's direction here, however, obviously does not refer to united prayer offered by a society of persons. We shall presently see (v. 9) that he prescribed a form of social prayer; and on another and later occasion he supposes that his disciples would assemble for religious worship, and has encouraged them to do it, although they should be few in number, by promising them his own presence and the blessing of God. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matth. xviii, 19.

7. *Use not vain repetitions, &c.* The thought is more exactly expressed, perhaps, in the words of Ecclesiasticus, "Make not much *babbling* when thou prayest." *Length* in our devotional exercises, in itself considered, is not and cannot be forbidden; for the full heart of man will not at times be satisfied with short and hasty communions with God. The long earnest prayers of Jesus before his death, and of the Apostles in the course of their arduous ministry, testify to the truth of this, as does also the experience of multitudes of Christians in every age. Neither is repetition of the same thought or feeling meant to be censured here. Who was it that said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me, nevertheless, not as *I* will, but as Thou wilt;" and then retiring, again and again gave utterance still to the same petition? The species of wordiness here condemned is that practised by the heathens: as in I Kings xviii, 26, "And they called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us;" and Acts xix, 34, "All with one voice about the space of two hours, cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians." They would offer also long and minute petitions for every temporal blessing they desired, as if their gods needed to be informed of their wants, and were more likely to grant some blessings if they petitioned for a number. It is in reference to this that our Lord, forbidding his disciples to imitate them, says, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

9. *Our Father which art in heaven:* In that spiritual heaven of which the sky is but an emblem: the heaven of holiness, mercy and love. This address also expresses the conviction, not only that the Almighty is a Father, but that he is the Father of all: abiding not merely in the Temple at Jerusalem, but everywhere; and extending the garment of his protection and love, like the heavens, over the whole race of man.

10. *Thy kingdom come.* That the *reign* of the Almighty should come in the hearts of men, that his will should be done on earth as in heaven, was the great object of the mission of Christ.

11. *Give us this day our daily bread.* The simplicity and moderation of this petition is in contrast with the wordy petitions in which the Gentiles were condemned as seeking many temporal blessings of God. With regard to these things our petition should be simply for whatsoever is necessary to our

12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.[b]

16. ¶ Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18. That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

19. ¶ Lay not up for yourselves

[b] Mark xi, 25, 26.

support. It is by a reference to this that the admonitions against too great worldly anxiety (ver. 25—34) are to be explained.

12. *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.* Forgive our short-comings in what is *due* to Thee, as we forgive the short-comings of others in what is *due* to us. The word used in the version of the Lord's prayer adopted in the Liturgy of the Church of England and employed by English Christians generally, "*trespasses*," better conveys the sentiment of our Lord. The petition corresponds to the benediction on the mount, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Those who are most ready to forgive man, are most likely to be forgiven by God.

13. *And lead us not into temptation.* The Apostle James says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." James i, 13, 14. The form here used, then, can imply nothing more than a prayer that we may be spared from those temptations which shall be too great for our strength. We must, as Jesus exhorted his disciples, "watch and pray that we enter not into temptation," and to this end we should strive to avoid those occasions, circumstances, thoughts, and society, which lead to sin.—*For thine is the kingdom*, &c. It is given as a reason for offering these petitions, that God is all-powerful and able to accomplish all our desires. These concluding words are usually called the Doxology, or ascription of praise. They are not found in the Lord's prayer as given by St. Luke, (Luke xi, 1—4), nor in many ancient manuscripts and versions here, and may probably be an addition, though a very appropriate one, from some of the liturgies in use in the early church.

Amen. This is properly the response of the people. It is a Hebrew word, and signifies—verily—so may it be. See 1 Cor. xiv, 16.

16. *Of a sad countenance.* The self-denial practised for the sake of duty should have no parade or ostentation about it: we should endeavour to retain under it our ordinary cheerful demeanour, that we may not appear unto men to fast, but unto our Father who seeth our secret hearts. The hypocrites of our Lord's time, on the contrary, multiplied unnecessarily their fasts and austerities, and, in order to shew what they were undergoing, went into public with disordered dresses, squalid, unwashed, and unanointed, with the dirt of ashes on their persons, and the frown of harshness and sorrow on their countenances. It is said, also, that they would put thorns under their clothes to draw blood, and, beat their heads against the walls: thus shewing that misdirected piety will alike, in all ages, lead men to subject themselves to useless tortures, instead of offering that reasonable sacrifice of their own desires and passions which directly promotes the cause of God and truth, the well-being of man, or the better discipline of their own souls in temperance, godliness, and brotherly charity.

19. *Treasures.* Wealth was possessed in the earlier stages of society in the form of amassed treasures; now in the form of owned property. A man may now be wealthy without having a single piece of gold in his house; all his property may be in the hands and in the employment of others, and yet being in his *name*, the law renders it *his* as securely as if it were all in his own hands. But in these earlier times, wealth consisted in the number of flocks and herds, and servants, and in the quantity of gold, silver, raiment, and household articles, which a man possessed in his own house, or on his own ground. Hence the allusion in the text to the "moth" getting into the clothing, &c. the

treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22. The light [*lamp*] of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single [*sound*], thy whole body shall be full of light.

23. But if thine eye be evil [*distempered*], thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness![c]

24. ¶ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.[d]

25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no *(anxious)* thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?[e]

26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27. Which of you by taking [*anxious*] thought can add one cubit unto his stature? [*one hour to his existence*].

28. And why take ye [*anxious*] thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

c Luke xi, 34—36.

d Luke xvi, 13. *e* Luke xii, 22, &c.

rust eating into the metals, and the thieves breaking in and carrying a man's treasure away with him.

21. *Where your treasure is, &c.* Nothing can be more true than this, our *treasure* is what we most highly value. What we most highly value commands most of our thoughts, desires, and affections. Whether our *treasure*, therefore, be honour, wealth, sensual gratification, knowledge, or righteousness, our heart will be with it. Our Lord, therefore, commands us to place our supreme affections on knowledge and goodness—to seek to clothe the spirit that shall never die in a garment of high and holy thoughts, rather than to deck the body that shall perish with the outward adornment of the goods of earth.

22. *The light (lamp) of the body is the eye.* If our bodily eye be sound, the path of our feet is in light: and if the purpose of our soul be high and good, the path of our soul is in light.

24. *Ye cannot serve God and mammon.* If we have two masters, each giving opposite commands, we must accept the service of the one, and reject the service of the other: we cannot serve them both. So a devotion to gold is inconsistent with a devotion to God. Our whole heart cannot be with both. *Mammon* is a Syriac word, signifying riches.

27. *Can add one cubit to his stature.* Our Lord is speaking here of our inability by anxious thought to alter the most trifling characteristics of our lot: "to do that thing which is least" (see Luke xii, 26). Now, to add a cubit to our stature is, on the contrary, not only an obviously difficult, but an impossible thing. The rendering given above, then, is much preferable. Our Lord's argument is—It is God, by whose power we have been created, and by whose bounty we are sustained: we can do little, nothing without Him: we cannot even add an hour to our existence: why should we, then, expend such anxious thought about food and raiment, when God has already shewn his bounty to us by gifts far more precious than these—even our lives and our frames. A *cubit* is the space between the elbow and the tip of the middle finger, averaging eighteen or twenty inches, and the idea of man's life being an object of measurement is not unknown to the Scriptures. Thus, Psalm xxxix, 4, 5. "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the *measure* of my days, what it is." "Behold, thou hast made my days as an *handbreadth*, and mine age is as nothing."

28. *The lilies of the field.* Perhaps the yellow amaryllis, which abounds in Palestine. The gorgeous display of the green vales, embroidered with a profusion of this flower at a time when most other flowers have faded, is well calculated to furnish the subject of an allusion to the spontaneous bounty of God.

29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven [*furnace*], *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31. Therefore take no [*anxious*] thought, saying, "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?".

32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34. Take therefore no [*anxious*] thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

CHAPTER VII.

JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.[a]

2. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

a Luke vi, 37—49.

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29. *Even Solomon in all his glory.* A countless variety of unlooked-for deformities present themselves in the most finished and delicate works of human art, when submitted to the microscope; but the complete dress with which the Creator has clad the flower, as with a skin, only discloses under the same examination a world of delicate tissues and splendid ornaments. So that whoever has examined with careful eye one of these common yet wonderful works of God, will acknowledge at once the force and the truth of the declaration, "that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

30. *The grass of the field.* From the scarcity of fuel in the East, it was usual to consume dried herbs and grass for fires and ovens: this perhaps accounts for the frequent allusion in the Scripture to all useless things being *burned.* "The Jews had various methods of baking their bread; in the ashes, on the hearth, upon copper plates, in pans and stoves. But the common kind of oriental oven, and the one no doubt here referred to, consists of a round hole in the ground, with the bottom covered with stones, and heated by fuel cast into it. When the stones are hot enough, the ashes are removed, and the dough is placed on the bottom of the oven, and turned whilst baking."

32. *The Gentiles seek.* See above—latter part of note on verse 7.

33. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, &c.* The first thing a man should be anxious about, is to do his duty and obey God—to cherish the highest hopes and the holiest desires—and then all that is necessary to his earthly well-being will be extended by God to his industry and exertion. "Ask great things, and little things shall be added unto you; ask heavenly things, and earthly things shall be added unto you. Men "never miss it more than when they live and labour for temporal good alone." Oftener than we suppose it, the wretched have been in some way the unrighteous.

34. *The morrow.* The whole of the above beautiful passage is a dissuasion from worldly anxiety. The reasons against it are numerous. The goodness of God; his past bounty to us, as manifested in our creation and preservation; the tendency of exclusive worldly care to defeat its own object, and rob the soul of its higher inheritance; the little that is necessary beyond what God has already given, or readily extends to our exertions; the impossibility, did we surround our lives with blessings, of extending them one moment beyond the appointed time; the sufficiency of each day's own duties and own supports; and the folly, therefore, of adding to it the contingent anxieties of the morrow, which will bring its own supports, if we do our duty and trust to God. The only precaution necessary in applying this beautiful series of admonitions is to beware how we are encouraged to fold our arms, and, doing nothing for ourselves, expect God to do every thing for us; and though violating the laws of industry and frugality, to expect to reap all the fruits of obedience to them. A Latin poet says, "Life has given nothing to mortals without great labour."

CHAP. VII.

1. *Judge not, &c.* The Scriptures abound in warnings against censoriousness, or the disposition to be harsh and severe in our judgments. "He shall have judgment with-

3. And why beholdest thou the mote [*splinter*] that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote [*splinter*] out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye?

5. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote [*splinter*] out of thy brother's eye.

6. ¶ Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

7. ¶ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:[b]

8. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9. Or what man is there of you, [*of*] whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10. Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

[b] Luke xi, 9—13.

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out mercy, that hath shewed no mercy," says St. James: and again, "My brethren, be not many masters," *i. e.* too ready to censure and rebuke, "knowing that (*thus*) we shall receive the greater condemnation." Men who judge severely, are commonly severely judged of. While kindness in our own hearts towards others usually begets kindness in others towards us, a disposition to complain and reproach usually produces complaint and reproach as its return.

3. *And why beholdest thou the mote* [*splinter*] *which is in thy brother's eye, &c.* The fault which we so severely blame in our fellow-creature may be to our greater fault or vice only as a little splinter to a beam of wood. But how with, as it were, a beam in our own eye, could we see to take the splinter out of our brother's eye? This is a highly figurative expression—just like the proverb which points out the difficulty of a thing by saying that it is "as hard as for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle," or, according to another oriental form of the same saying, "as hard as for an *elephant* to pass through the eye of a needle." A man ought to be very good himself to justify his being very severe on others: but the good man is usually *not* severe—he is too much occupied in thinking of his own deficiencies, and in trying to cure them.

6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, &c.* The clauses of this sentence should be transposed, thus—"Give not that which is holy to the *dogs*, lest they turn again and *rend* you: neither cast ye your pearls before *swine*, lest they *trample* them under their feet." The action of *rending* would not be appropriately attributed to *swine*, nor that of *trampling under feet* to *dogs*. Such transpositions are not uncommon in poetical and proverbial sentences. Thus, "I am black but comely; as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon;"—that is, "I am black as the tents of Kedar, comely as the curtains of Solomon." *Dog* is applied metaphorically to a man of an ill-natured aggressive disposition—a censorious person, or backbiter: *swine* to a man of a low, grovelling, sensual character. To such, while unconverted from these defective dispositions, it is vain to offer the holier services of religion, or the purer motives of more refined virtue; they will only hate or despise them: and this insensibility on their part is the bitterest punishment and the most awful curse attendant on their condition.

7. *Ask, and it shall be given to you, &c. Asking, seeking, knocking*, are only different forms of expressing the earnestness of our prayers. Yet the mere asking, with however great an importunity, is not sufficient. We must ask in faith, in a particular frame of mind, and with special purpose of heart: if for social blessings, with right social dispositions; if for forgiveness of sins, with a disposition to forgive; if for temporal mercies, as seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Praying thus, no one shall be denied. An effectual fervent prayer offered in a righteous spirit always availeth much. We must not pray as dictating to the All-wise, but as those who pray for *His* blessing in *His* mode. Earnest prayers for improvement in our hearts and characters ever carry with them more or less, even at the moment of their utterance, their own fulfilment. Whilst we are earnestly praying against evil dispositions, they are giving way; and for righteous principles, they are at the moment

11. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

13. ¶ Enter ye in at the strait [*narrow*] gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:[c]

14. Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15. ¶ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.[d]

16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

c Luke xiii, 24.

d Mark xiii, 22.

forming within us. There is no groundwork for the Christian character like earnest, personal, private prayer.

11. *Give good things.* St. Luke says (Luke xi, 13) "Give the Holy Spirit." His holy Spirit is the best thing of which God can give to us, and that, therefore, for which we should chiefly pray. The argument in these verses, from the goodness and compassion of parental affection in frail and feeble man to the necessarily greater mercy and beneficence of the Divine and Universal Father, is brought out still more fully and pathetically in Luke xv. These and similar passages shew that the goodness we might expect from the human parent we may be certain of from God, and what would be cruel in a human father would be impossible in the Divine.

12. *Therefore all things, &c.* "The common *iron* rule is to do to others, as others do to us—the *golden* rule of our Saviour, to do to others as we would have them do to us." *This is the law and the prophets*, or, as it is said, of the two great commandments, Matth. xxii, 40. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Love to God and love to man are the foundation and the perfection of all religion.

13. *Enter ye in at the strait [narrow] gate, &c.* The way of virtue, though happy, requires selection and determination; it is not usually the first, easy, open road, on which the multitude are spontaneously thronging—we have to look for it, resolutely to seek it, and perhaps to make an effort to enter it. The difference is illustrated by the difference between the large gate of a city, when fully opened and presenting a free entrance, and the little side gate, through which we have, as it were, to squeeze: and between the broad public street, and the narrow and more remote lane of a city. No man can be truly benevolent who always follows the first promptings of his own pleasure and gratification; and no man can be truly virtuous, who always obeys the spontaneous and uncontrolled impulses of his nature. He must seek with diligence, and enter with determination, a path which, though less broad and obvious, leads to a safer and happier result—even the discipline of his character, the salvation of his soul—eternal life. Nothing so surely *leadeth to destruction* as a disposition to follow in any direction which accidental companionship may lead to, and to enter on any road which the multitude around us may be going, instead of pausing diligently to consider and carefully to select and perseveringly to pursue the path which principle points out and duty commands.

15. *Beware of false prophets.* The word prophet in the Scriptures means not only a foreteller of future things, but a teacher generally. Many false teachers arose after Christ and deceived many. Judæa was full of them even at this time, for many of the Pharisees and Doctors of the Law were such teachers.

16. *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* Christ offers a test by which the true may be distinguished from the false teachers; for as it has been said, "A man's works are the *tongue* of his heart, and *tell* honestly whether he is inwardly corrupt or pure."

21. ¶ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils [*dæmons*]? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.[e]

24. ¶ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine [*teaching*]:

29. For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.[a]

2. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him [*did him obeisance*], saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.[b]

e Lu. xiii, 27. Lu. iv, 32. a Matt. v, 1. Lu. vii, 1.

b Mark i, 40—45. Luke v, 12—15.

21. *Not every one that saith unto me*—Rather, "*No one* who merely saith unto me, "Lord, Lord." The *profession* of obedience and discipleship is not sufficient: actual obedience and discipleship, or the doing of the will of our Heavenly Father, forms the ground of admission to the heavenly kingdom.

22. *In that day.* In the day of the kingdom.

23. *I never knew you.* It is a solemn and alarming reflection, that there may be many persons who have prophesied, or taught in the name of Christ, expounded and enforced his doctrines, and even cast many evil spirits out of society, and done many great works of public good, whose hearts may yet have been far from the simplicity and purity that is in Christ, and to whom he will have to say in his judgment, "Depart from me; I never knew you." So necessary is it to add *being* to *doing*, the inward heart of goodness to the outward life of righteousness.

24. *Which built his house upon a rock.* Judæa was a rocky country, and subject to heavy periodical rains. A house that is built upon the rock will be able to withstand these rains and floods; but one built on the loose earth or deposit, which lies upon or between the rocks, will very likely be overthrown by the torrent that sweeps away the soil or land on which it rests. Thus, the man who hears Christ and obeys him will be able to withstand all the storms of trial and temptation; but he who merely hears him, and does not struggle to *be* what he enjoins, will give way before the torrent-streams that beat against his virtue.

27. *And great was the fall of it.* "The traveller is touched with sadness as he surveys the ruins of splendid temples and palaces;" but what are the desolations of earthly fabrics to the ruin and downfall of a soul?

29. *For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.* Either because he taught from himself, and as with the authority of Heaven; and not as the Scribes did, from the Law of Moses and the traditionary interpretations of the ancients; or because his words possessed a commanding power over the hearts and consciences of the people, while the Scribes feebly enjoined on them obsolete externalities, which possessed no spiritual value or interest to them.

CHAPTER VIII.

2. *There came a leper.* The leprosy was a disorder of the skin, which covered the body with white scales, sometimes reducing the sufferer under it to a corrupt and offensive condition of the person. It was highly infectious, and the precautions enjoined by the Mosaic law in Levit. xiii, though stringent and oppressive, were necessary to prevent the

Jesus healeth the Leper.

3. And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

5. ¶ And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,[c]

6. And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but

[c] Luke vii, 1—10.

spread of the contagion. The leper was to be kept separate from the society of his fellow creatures. His clothes were to be rent, and his head to be bare; there was to be a covering on his upper lip to prevent immediate contact with his breath; and he was to raise a cry of "Unclean, unclean," when any stranger approached, to prevent any one from unwittingly touching him, or coming too near him. The disease was, and is to this day, very prevalent in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine; it may, therefore, be considered endemic, or connected with the soil and the inhabitants. The Israelites brought it with them from Egypt, where the marshy ground, the hard labour, the spare diet, and the uncleanly habits of an enslaved and severely-wrought people, would have the effect of making the disease more common and more virulent among them. The dry air of the desert, the improved habits consequent on a state of freedom, and the scrupulous attention to the skin afterwards prescribed by the wise sanitory regulations of the Mosaic law, would tend to check its growth. It was, however, still in the time of our Lord a lamentable and often an incurable disease in Palestine, and remains so now. Unhealthy diet, badly constructed dwellings, dirty habits, and a neglected state of the skin, in all countries conduce to the formation of cutaneous (or skin) diseases: for this reason daily or frequent ablutions of the whole person should be practised, wherever possible. The social intercourse of various classes of mankind, and the growth of refinement, mutual respect, and mutual regard, are discouraged and retarded more by the neglect of personal cleanliness than the cursory observer would at first suppose.—*Worshipped him.* The original word here does not mean necessarily *religious* worship. It literally signifies crouching like a dog at the feet of a person: more generally, therefore, homage, obeisance, the most humble respect. This use of the English word is still retained by the application of the term "worship" to magistrates, and "worshipful" to distinguished corporations or companies.

4. *See thou tell no man—shew thyself to the priest.* Jesus seems, in the first place, to have desired that the man should comply with the wise sanitory arrangements of his country, which required a certificate of cure from the priest, who was in this case the public officer of health. In the next place he desired this certificate to be obtained before rumour carried the cure to the ears of the priests, in order that an adequate testimony might be procured of the reality of the cure, that the genuineness of the work might not be disputed. In the third place, though not refusing to perform the work of mercy, he did not at this time wish any instantaneous publicity to his deeds of wonder, lest the animosity of the ruling classes should be arrayed against him, before his mission was accomplished, or lest the impatience of his followers should lead them to fulfil their own material views of the Messianic kingdom by proclaiming him a king.—*The gift.* For the offerings prescribed on occasion of a recovery from leprosy, see Levit. xiv, 1—32.

5. *Capernaum.* Situate on the Lake of Galilee.—*Centurion.* A Roman placed in command over a division of a hundred foot, *centum* signifying a hundred.

6. *Sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.* Palsy, or paralysis, is not a disease usually accompanied with acute pain. But the complaint here indicated is supposed by some writers on Jewish antiquities to have been one accompanied with violent cramping pains.

8. *I am not worthy.* The Gentiles were regarded as unclean by the Jews. This exclusive prejudice was checked by the vision of Peter, Acts x. But knowing the existence of such a feeling, the Roman modestly waives the necessity of Jesus actually coming under his roof.

The Centurion's servant.

speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

10. When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.[d]

12. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into [*the*] outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.[e]

13. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, *so* be it done unto thee.[f] And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

Peter's Mother-in-law.

14. ¶ And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.[g]

15. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

16. ¶ When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils [*dæmons*]: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:[h]

d Lu. xiii, 28, 29. *e* Matt. xxii, 13; xxiv, 51; xxv, 30. *f* Mark v, 34. Luke vii, 50.

g Mark i, 30, 31. Luke iv, 38, 39. *h* Mark 1, 32. Luke iv, 40, 41.

9. *I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me.* The centurions were usually men promoted from the ranks on the ground of merit. They issued orders, however, to the soldiers under them, commanded the sentinels on duty, inflicted punishments, administered rewards, and took their places at the head of their troops when the army was in order of battle. The centurion in the text, then, means to say, that even he, although a man under the authority of officers superior to himself, yet could issue his orders to the men under his command, and require instant obedience to them. How much more, therefore, should Jesus be able to give directions and commissions by a word of his mouth to others, and be saved the personal trouble of executing them himself.

10. *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* Jesus was astonished and delighted with the unreserved trust this man, a heathen and a soldier, reposed in him, and he said that he had not found such faith before, no, not even among the favoured race of Israel.

11. *Many shall come, &c.* This instance of the centurion shall not be a solitary instance. Many shall come from all nations, east and west, and share in the religion, the hopes, and the promises of the Fathers.—*Shall sit down.* This is a strong expression. The Jews would not have social intercourse with the Gentiles: but here our Lord declares that many of these Gentiles shall come and *sit down* to the spiritual feast with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the kingdom of God.

12. *Outer darkness.* The image is here taken from a banqueting-room. The guests are surrounded by light and warmth, and abundance—those without are exposed to darkness, cold, and want. While, our Lord says, faithful and believing Gentiles are thus admitted to the hall of the spiritual feast, the very children of Abraham, owing to their alienation and unbelief, shall be left in the "outer or outside darkness of exclusion, weeping, shivering, and gnashing their teeth." This passage is a most striking figurative description of the happiness and privileges into which many of the then heathen nations afterwards entered by receiving the light and truth of the Christian faith, and of the unhappiness and suffering, and spiritual loss, to which multitudes of the race of Abraham have been subjected by their continued rejection of that faith.

14. *Peter's house.* Bethsaida, a place on the Sea of Galilee, south of Capernaum, was "the city of Andrew and Peter." Either, therefore, Jesus was now at Bethsaida, or Peter had removed from that place to Capernaum; or this was the residence of his mother-in-law, the patient of the text.

16. *When the even was come.* They waited till the Sabbath, which ended at sunset, was over; for we find from Mark i, 21, that these occurrences took place on the Sabbath. This is one of the trifling undesigned coincidences in which the Gospel narratives confirm and support each other, and shew their essential agreement and truthfulness.—*Healed all that were sick.* "The Redeemer, surrounded by

The Scribe's offer.

17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

18. ¶ Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

Christ's answer.

19. And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.[i]

20. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

21. And another of his disciples

[i] Luke ix, 57—60.

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crowds of unhappy people, bowed down by their physical sufferings, exhibited, in the healing power by which he relieved their *external* wants, an image of that spiritual energy which he constantly exercises, through the power of his redemption, upon the *hearts* of men."

17. *Which was spoken by Esaias the prophet:* Isai. liii, 4, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." The passage is understood by St. Matthew as describing the relief which Jesus administered to our bodily diseases; by St. Peter it is understood as describing the relief which by his own sufferings he should administer to our spiritual diseases. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." I Pet. ii, 24. Both ways of applying this passage from Isaiah are instructive; but their difference should teach us not to lay too great a doctrinal stress upon the mode in which passages in the Old Testament are quoted by writers in the New, as they are more often quoted for the purpose of a general illustration than for precise doctrinal inculcation.

18. *When he saw great multitudes.* The little fishing-boat of his disciples was often found by Jesus a convenient mode of temporary escape from the crowds that pressed upon him. Few would be able to follow him. Now, he traversed a great part of the lake upwards (if he were at Capernaum) to the country of the Gergesenes.

19. *A certain scribe.* The Scribes were not a sect, like the Pharisees (though they usually belonged to the sect of the Pharisees), but an order of men employed in the transcribing, study, and teaching of the law and the traditions. They were the learned men of the day, and were, most probably, Levites by birth; and thus the sacred or clerical body was divided into priests and scribes; the former being the ritual functionaries under the law, the latter the legal and instructional.

20. *The Son of man.* Considerable doubt rests upon the exact import of this title; some supposing that it is adopted by our Lord merely as a title of humility, in the sense of David, when he says, "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and *the Son of man* that thou visitest him:" others supposing that it is employed by our Lord in modesty, to avoid the continual repetition of the first person in his discourses: others, again, believing that it is an assertion of his essential and simple humanity, and adopted with a view to prevent present deification or future idolatry. It seems, however, to have been a title deliberately chosen by our Lord as descriptive of his relation to mankind and his office as regards them. It is applied numberless times by the Prophet Ezekiel to himself, and was probably chosen by our Lord as a well-known prophetic appellation, which in its inner force and application was descriptive of himself. What that inner significance in the apprehension of Christ himself was, we have no sufficient means of positively deciding; but we may reverently conjecture that, in adopting this as his title among men, he meant to indicate how entirely he identified himself with the race of man, and how in his joys and sorrows, in his trials and triumphs, in his life and mission, in his death and immortality, he was the type, representative, forerunner, and model of our race.—*Hath not where to lay his head.* This description of his poverty and homelessness was given to the Scribe, in order to test his sincerity, and also to shew him, if he really followed Jesus, what, in a worldly point of view, he had to expect.

21. *Suffer me first to go and bury my father.* This sentence must be interpreted with some latitude: it must mean, "I will follow thee in due time, but suffer me first to tend the declining hours of my father's life, and discharge the last duties which he will demand from me." That the disciple meant that his father was actually lying dead at the moment, and awaiting interment, and that he asks Jesus' permission to attend to the last rites, and is refused, is inconceivable; for burials among the Jews and most oriental nations (except in those cases, chiefly occurring

The Tempest calmed.

said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

22. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead [*leave the dead to*] bury their dead.

23. ¶ And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.[k]

25. And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

26. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

27. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

28. ¶ And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils [*dæmons*] coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.[l]

[k] Mark iv, 37—41. Luke viii, 23—25.

[l] Mark v, 1—20. Luke viii, 26—40.

among the wealthy, when the bodies were embalmed) were immediate. If the person died in the morning, he was usually interred the same day: if in the evening, the burial was only deferred to the next morning. It is scarcely possible, considering the shortness and vehemence of the mourning among the Jews, that the young man would have left his father's house and family, and joined the crowd surrounding Jesus as a listener and learner, under such circumstances; and the denial of his request by Jesus is incompatible with our conception of the humane and gentle character of our Lord.

22. *Let the dead* [leave the dead to] *bury their dead.* The call upon those who were willing to enter the service of the Messiah was urgent and immediate. They were to leave all and follow him—employments and possessions and relatives—houses and lands, and father and mother. In the case before us, Jesus himself might be dead before the young man's parent. Those who would learn of him had no time for hesitation and delay; they must yield themselves up entirely, and at once. Jesus, therefore, says to the disciple who had determined to consecrate himself to him, "If you have resolved to follow me, you have no duty on earth before or greater than this. Leave to those who are not possessed with the same earnest desires as you to promote the kingdom of everlasting life, who are spiritually dead therefore, to devote themselves to the duties you speak of. Let them tend the couches of the sick and the dying: your pressing business is with the kingdom of God and the salvation of the world—"Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God," (Luke ix, 60.)

23. *His disciples followed him.* Mark says, (ch. iv, 36), "And there were also with him other little ships:" in these boats, therefore, the disciples probably accompanied Jesus.

24. *There arose a great tempest in the sea.* The Jordan passes through the sea of Galilee with a strong current; and when this is opposed by contrary winds, which blow there with the force of a hurricane from the south-east, a boisterous sea is instantly raised, which the small vessels of the country, such as were anciently in use, were ill qualified to resist. This account is exactly borne out by the expressive words of St. Luke, "and there came down a storm of wind on the lake."

25. *Lord, save us: we perish.* "In Mark there is a slight vein of reproach; "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" and in Luke great earnestness, "Master, Master, we perish!"

26. *Why are ye fearful, O! ye of little faith?* Julius Cæsar said, with a proud encouragement to the master of the vessel in which he was, when a storm came on, "Thou bearest Cæsar and his fortunes!" "How much greater reason had the followers of Christ to hear the roaring of the winds and waves without fear!"—*And there was a great calm.* And so, when the power of Jesus rests upon our souls, the storms of life's sea shall not overwhelm us: we shall look out upon them with a hopeful courage, and presently, if we watch and wait with faith and patience, there shall be "a great calm."

28. *The country of the Gergesenes.* Or, as Mark and Luke, naming the district from Gadara, its principal town, call it, of the *Gadarenes. Two* (Mark and Luke speak of only *one*) *coming out of the tombs.* These were often excavated from the rock, or covered over and vaulted, so as to afford an occasional shelter from the inclemency of the weather: and here, therefore, the wretched

29. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

30. And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

31. So the devils [*dæmons*] besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

32. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place [*the precipice*] into the sea, and perished in the waters.

33. And they that kept them fled,

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beings described in the text took up their gloomy dwelling.—*Exceeding fierce*, so as to attack the passers by: the other Evangelists (see the parallel passages) speak of one of them as breaking the chains with which he was bound, cutting himself with stones, and wearing no clothes.

29. *And behold they cried out, saying, &c.* As the questions that follow are the mere outpourings of insanity, we need not be careful to know their exact meaning, if they have any, nor concerned if we cannot ascertain it. It is probable, however, that the common impression of the country and the times being that insane persons were possessed by evil spirits or dæmons, these poor men, according to a customary feature in insanity, took up the general impression, and identified themselves with the spirits by which they were supposed to be possessed. They thus, hearing of the approach of Jesus, and knowing, from the common wondering remarks of all the people around them, that he claimed to be the Messiah, immediately expressed the fear that he was coming, according to a popular expectation of the Messiah's office, to drive them away, and expel them to some place of punishment and torment. In this alarm they beg that they may be allowed to prolong their sojourn upon earth, by entering the herd of swine, which are near, and taking Jesus' command (*"Go"*), or, as in Luke, his mere tacit or supposed permission (*"he suffered them"*), they rushed upon the swine, and drove them over the adjoining precipice into the sea. The men, now persuaded that they were relieved from the spirits that tormented them, came to their right mind again: and thus Jesus, who seems usually to have employed some external agency in his wonderful cures, availed himself of this impression for the promotion of his benign purpose concerning them. That the destruction of the swine was anticipated by him does not appear from the narrative; and we shall be most probably nearer the truth in regarding the madmen as the *actors* in this scene, more than Jesus. Some writers, supposing that the command or the permission of our Lord extended to the actual destruction of the swine, and being anxious to see justifying causes for such a waste of human food and property, have called to mind the Jewish law which forbad the consumption of swine's flesh; and thus they reason, the cure of the dæmoniacs was made also the occasion of the punishment of the owners of the herd, who held them for purposes in violation of the Mosaic law. But, to pass over other objections to this explanation, is it to be supposed that Jesus, at the very moment of the breaking up of the old ritual and ceremonial dispensation, and when the sanitory result contemplated by the Mosaic law was accomplished, would in so remarkable, and to the owners so disastrous, a manner have signalized his adherence to all those regulations which were on the verge of being superseded by a freer and more spiritual law? It may require a free interpretation of the letter of the account, but we decidedly prefer the interpretation which makes the *madmen* the authors of a destruction which Jesus himself neither commanded nor anticipated.

34. *They besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.* The Gadarenes took the same view of the transaction that Christians have taken since, that Jesus was the direct author of the catastrophe of the swine, and their terror and alarm were excited at the prospect of his further stay among them. This was a probable result of the event, however occasioned, which would naturally be attributed to the agency, or which, at least, was caused by the presence, of Jesus. But Jesus never aimed at striking terror into men's minds, or gaining command over them by works of destructive power. In his whole career there is nothing like it. A fig-tree, already barren, seems to be the only thing he ever destroyed.

The Paralytic man arises and takes up his bed.

and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils [*dæmons*].

34. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought *him* that he would depart out of their coasts.

CHAPTER IX.

AND he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.[a]

2. And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.[b]

3. And, behold, certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth.

4. And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5. For whether is easier, to say, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

6. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

7. And he arose, and departed to his house.

8. But when the multitudes saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

a Matthew iv, 13. *b* Mark ii, 3—12. Luke v, 18—26.

CHAPTER IX.

1. *His own city.* Capernaum: so called because he had chosen it as the place of his usual residence: see Matth. iv, 13.

2. *Seeing their faith.* Their *faith* is more fully shewn in the account given, Mark ii, 1—5, and Luke v, 18—20, where the paralytic is described as being let down by his friends through the roof. Some suppose that Jesus was in the *area* or court of the house, and that they only removed the awning by which this place was covered. But the words of St. Luke are express that they "let him down *through the tiling*;" and St. Mark speaks of uncovering the roof, and *breaking it up*. The account of the Evangelists, therefore, seems to be that Jesus was in an upper room, and that the friends of the sick man, being unable to bring him through the crowd upstairs, bore him from a neighbouring house along the roofs (which were flat, and could be walked over for considerable distances), and, arriving at the house in which Jesus was, removed some of the tiling, and let him down immediately into the presence of the Healer. —*Thy sins be forgiven thee.* This was either a salutation of spiritual comfort, or meant that the sins, of which the disease was regarded as the consequence, were forgiven, and thus the disease itself removed. The sorrows and sicknesses of life are, to a great extent, the direct or indirect results of sin in ourselves or in others; but the Jews pressed this doctrine too far in its individual applications; and as the friends of Job held it to be incontestible that he was afflicted on account of his sins, and that a good man could not be subjected to such suffering as he was, so the Jews of our Lord's time held the same doctrine (though it was rebutted in other portions of the book of Job), and, whenever they saw a pre-eminent sufferer, supposed that they saw necessarily a pre-eminent sinner, or the descendant of one. Thus, in John ix, they asked whether the blind man had sinned or his parents, and Jesus declared that his blindness must not be attributed to either cause; and, again, he combatted the same view in reference to the falling of the tower in Siloam (Luke xiii, 4). Still, our Lord might continue to employ the usual phraseology on this subject, as he did on that of *possession*, and speak of a man's sins being forgiven him, when practically he meant that the diseases, indissolubly connected by the prevailing philosophy with the sins, would be removed.

3. *This man blasphemeth.* Because, as St. Mark and St. Luke represent them asking—"Who can forgive sins but God alone?" The answer is contained in the 8th verse of this chapter—the power had been given to the Son of man. Even ministers of religion among us now claim the power of declaring absolution and remission of sins upon repentance, and the prophets of old exercised it. Why should it be supposed, then, a trespass on the peculiarly Divine power in our Lord to use this language?

6. *Take up thy bed.* The light mattress on which he lay.

Christ reproached for eating with publicans and sinners.

9. ¶ And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.[c]

10. ¶ And it came to pass, as Jesus sat [*lay*] at meat in the house, behold, many publicans [*tax-gatherers*] and sinners came and sat [*lay*] down with him and his disciples.

11. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master [*Teacher*] with publicans [*tax-gatherers*] and sinners?

12. But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

13. But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have [*I wish for*] mercy, and not [*for*] sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance [*I am not come to call righteous men, but sinners*].

14. ¶ Then came to him the dis-

c Mark ii, 14—17. Luke v, 27—31. Luke xv, 2.

9. *Matthew* Supposed, from the similarity of the accompanying circumstances, to be the same person as in Mark (ii, 14) and Luke (v, 27) is called Levi. It was not uncommon for one person to bear more than one designation: thus, Simon was also called Peter or Cephas, Lebbeus was also called Thaddeus, and John was also called Mark.—*Receipt of custom.* The duties upon various articles of sale and merchandize were collected at the entrance of cities, or at the ferries on lakes and rivers.

10. *Sat.* The original Greek word here employed signifies *reclined*, but it is translated *sat*, in accommodation to western customs. The Greeks and Romans were in the habit of taking their meals in a recumbent posture, and the Jews at this time did the same; having brought the custom very probably home with them from the Babylonish captivity, if they had it not, indeed, among them before. We have no particular description of the mode in which the Jews reclined at table, but, judging from the known practice of other nations, we are to suppose that the table consisted of three sides, at each of which couches were set, on which the guests placed themselves (one, two, or more usually three, on each); the fourth side and the space in the middle being left free for the servants to bring and remove the dishes. The couches at the top (or, as we should call them, the seats at the cross table) were the most honourable; and of these, the middle seat on the couch was the most distinguished.—*In the house.* Matthew's own house, probably, though he omits to specify this.—*Sinners.* This was the contemptuous appellation by which the stricter Jews called *gentiles* and *foreigners*. Sometimes they termed them *dogs*.

11. *Why eateth your Master, &c.* To eat in the house of a publican (whom the strict Jews regarded with abhorrence, as an emissary of the oppressive Roman power), and with gentiles (who disregarded the ceremonial law with respect to diet), was a familiarity, which to the exclusive and self-righteous Pharisee had something immoral in it. This is the last resort of narrow-mindedness and spiritual pride in all ages, to refuse to sit down to meat with fellow-creatures who belong to a different sect or country from ourselves.

12. *They that be whole need not a physician.* "Jesus reasons with them on their own ground. 'I am a healer of the soul; of course it is to these very persons, whom you regard as so sinful and lost, that I ought naturally to come, to restore them. The physician is for the sick, not for the well. According to your own admission, I am now associating with those very persons who will be most benefited by a spiritual teacher and reformer. Instead, therefore, of reproach, my conduct is, on your own principles, worthy of approbation.'"

13. *I will have mercy.* Hosea vi, 6, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice." God is better pleased with charity and loving-kindness towards his creatures than with sacrifice and ceremony towards himself. The Pharisees abounded in the latter and were deficient in the former.—*For I am not come to call righteous men, but sinners.* "If," says Jesus, continuing his argument with his upbraiders, "ye say that I am among sinners, it is sinners whom I am come to call to the truth. Why should I go among those who already consider themselves righteous, and need no physician? The man who is most satisfied with his own virtue has least to be satisfied of; and the self-righteous who neglect mercy are more sinners than the merciful, who know not sacrifice." Jesus, however, did not fulfil their own argument against themselves; for here, and throughout his ministry, he is calling

Why the Disciples of Christ did not fast.

ciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?[e]

15. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

16. No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

17. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles [*skins*]: else the bottles break [*the skins burst*], and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

18. ¶ While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him [*did him obeisance*], saying, My daughter

e Mark ii, 18—22. Luke v, 33—39.

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these supposed righteous but real sinners to repentance and the truth.

15. *Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn.* Jesus gives two reasons why his disciples do not fast, like the disciples of John. First, fasting is a sign of sorrow. John's disciples had reason, for their master was taken from them and was in prison. The disciples of Jesus had no such occasion, for their Master was still with them. Those who take a part in bridal festivities (called, according to Hebrew idiom, *the children of the bride-chamber*) do not mourn while the head and occasion of all their rejoicing is yet among them: neither, then, did the disciples of Christ fast and mourn while he was with them. But the days would come when he should be taken away from them, and then they should have call for sorrow. Our mourning, therefore, should be natural, not artificial, when the occasion for it arrives, not when there is no cause but for joy. Secondly, though to Christ's disciples, as to other men, there would come seasons when they would have to fast from the joy of their eyes and their hearts, he would not even then prescribe to them formal and artificial fasting from food and necessary support. For,

16. *No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment.* No one takes an old threadbare cloak, and puts a piece of new strong cloth into it, because this would only pull away by its greater strength the rotten or yielding cloth around it, and make the rent worse. And so Jesus would leave the old garment of Judaism in its ancient unity, and not attempt to insert into it fragments of a stronger, newer, and more spiritual faith. Jesus left fasting and all the other customs of the ritual law as he found them, forming, as they did, a religious garment, which those who were converted to Christianity would gradually lay aside for a new one, but which he did not propose to amend by the introduction of any new, strong, and therefore unsuitable material. We must not understand fasting as forbidden here. To fast from our own pleasure and indulgence, to fast even from our own sorrow and mourning, to fast from luxury, and at times also from any kind of food, may become our duty, from motives of health, of prudence, of good will for others, or for the sake of better devoting ourselves to the service of God or man. Fasting in this sense is a Christian virtue, though it usually passes under a different name, that of self-denial. But the occasions of this self-denial should not be fixed, formal, or artificial, but arise as the circumstances arise which call for the practice of the virtue.

17. *Into old bottles.* The bottles here referred to were skins of sheep or goats. When new, they were capable of distention; and thus the new wine put into them might go through the process of fermentation without bursting them. But when they were old and dry, new wine would have destroyed them, though they might still be fit for old wine which had already passed the stage of fermentation. The new wine of Christ's religion, if put into the old bottles of pharisaic formalism, would have burst the bottles, and itself been spilt. It is essential to the genius of Christianity that it should be left to its own free development, unclogged by any forms which have not their birth in and with itself. It is naturally expansive, shaping itself into great varieties of outward mode; and if it be attempted to confine it within forms or formularies which itself has outgrown, it will burst through these; and whatever of good these, therefore, contain, will in this manner run over and be lost. The new wine must be put into new bottles, and both will be preserved.

18. *A certain ruler.* Of the Synagogue. From Mark v, 22, and Luke viii, 41, we learn that his name was Jairus.

The issue of blood healed.

is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and *so did* his disciples.

20. ¶ And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment:[f]

21. For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

22. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

23. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels, and the people making a noise [*lamentation*],

f Mark v, 25—34. Luke viii, 43—48.

The Ruler's daughter raised.

24. He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

25. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

26. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

27. ¶ And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on us.[g]

28. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

g Matthew xx, 30—34. Mark x, 47, &c. Luke xviii, 35, &c.

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20. *The hem of his garment.* One of those fringes or tassels of thread prescribed in Numbers xv, 38. The woman by the law of Moses was ceremonially unclean; and for this reason she approaches Jesus with such diffidence and timidity. She probably thought that the touch of his cloak would act as a charm: just as the people subsequently thought that the *shadow* of the Apostle Peter would be efficacious in the same manner. Acts v, 15.

23. *The minstrels.* The poorest Israelite thought himself bound to provide two pipes and one wailing-woman when his wife died: the number of both was increased with the means of the family; and in the present instance there was probably a considerable number of each. In the earlier stages of society it is usual to express grief at the death of relations in a violent and tumultuous manner, not unaccompanied by great excesses in eating and drinking. Both of these the Jewish laws attempted to restrain; the first by the provisions of Lev. xix, 28, and Deut. xiv, 1: "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you."—"Ye are the children of the Lord your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead." And against the second the Sanhedrim passed a law (which by its latitude shews the terrible excesses it was intended to check), confining the drinking privilege on these occasions to ten cups each guest. But "the Christian doctrine of immortality has blunted the edge of human sorrow, and the gentle and pure spirit of the Gospel has rebuked these unseemly indulgences, and the violence and heartlessness of hired lamentations." These customs are rapidly disappearing: the principal remains of them among us are found in the Irish wake. It is natural for the bereaved to bear about them some outward sign and mark of their bereavements, if it were only to protect them for a time against any unsympathizing encounter; but, where this is attended with inconvenience and unsuitable expense, it becomes an injury to the living, and ceases to be a respect to the dead.

24. *For the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.* When a distinct reference is intended to be made to a restoration of life, the Scriptures speak of death under this image of sleep. Thus, "our friend Lazarus sleepeth." "And when he (Stephen) had said this, he fell asleep." "They also which are fallen asleep in Christ."

25. *He went in.* Peter, James, John, and the parents of the damsel, being with him. See Mark v, 40, and Luke viii, 51.

27. *Thou Son of David.* This was the same appellation as was afterwards used by the children in the Temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," and involved a recognition of his Messianic character.

Blind and Dumb cured.

30. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See *that* no man know *it*.

31. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

32. ¶ As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil [*dæmon*].[h]

33. And when the devil [*dæmon*] was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

34. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils [*dæmons*] through the prince of the devils [*dæmons*].[i]

35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel [*proclaiming the good tidings*] of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.[k]

h Matthew xii, 22—32. Luke xi, 14—22.
i Mark iii, 22—26. *k* Mark vi, 6.

The sheep without shepherd.

36. ¶ But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

37. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few;

38. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

CHAPTER X.

AND when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* [*over*] unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.[a]

2. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his

a Mark iii, 13—19; vi, 7—13. Luke vi, 13—16; ix, 1—6.

33. *When the devil (dæmon) was cast out, the dumb spake.* It would appear the dumbness was not the consequence so much of organic as of mental defect. The person was afflicted probably with a melancholy madness, which forbad him to open his mouth. When the cloud was removed from his mind, the fetter fell from his tongue.

34. *Through the prince of the devils.* In Matth. xii, 24, called Beelzebub. This is the last resort of malice, when the reality of a good action cannot be denied, to attribute it to a bad source.

36. *As sheep having no shepherd.* "As sheep, whose keepers took no care of them, would tire themselves in seeking pasture, so the common people," left without a wise guidance to the sources of spiritual food, *fainted and were scattered abroad.* Our Lord said it should be the prayer of the disciples that wise and holy guides should be raised up for them.

CHAPTER X.

2. *Apostles.* The twelve principal disciples of our Lord, selected by himself to be the companions and the witnesses of his ministry, are here first called *Apostles*, or persons *sent forth*. Before this they were called *disciples* or learners. People ought always to be learners before they are preachers; disciples before they become apostles.

2. *The first, Simon, who is called Peter.* Although no special order appears to be contemplated in this enumeration of the Apostles, yet it is natural that, to any writer of the gospel-history, the name of Peter should occur first, both because he was the most active and the most prominent of the early preachers of Christianity (except St. Paul, whose appointment was not made till subsequently), and because apparently he was the first person distinctly chosen by Jesus to be of the number of his immediate disciples and future apostles (compare Matt. iv, 18, 19; Mark i, 16, 17; Luke iv, 38; John i, 41, 42). If, however, Peter was the first of the Apostles, as in the sense now explained he seems to have been, and always to have continued among the Jewish Christians, as Paul was among the Gentiles, it surely does not follow that every Bishop of Rome since, any more than that every person who has since been called Peter, should be the Primate of all Christians. Simon received the name of Rock from our Lord on the occasion mentioned in Matth. xvi, 13—20, to signify the firmness with which he would maintain the cause of Christ. The Greek word for *Rock* is Peter, and the Hebrew is *Cephas*. Simon is called both indiscriminately. The name of Peter's father was John or Jonas; hence our Lord calls him, in the passage above referred

Appointment of the Apostles.

brother; James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3. Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican [*tax-gatherer*]; James *the son* of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus;

4. Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot [*the Iscariot*], who also betrayed him.

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to, Barjona, son of Jona.—*Andrew his brother.* It is interesting to observe how many instances there are of *brothers* being associated in this apostolic band. Peter and Andrew were brothers; James and John were brothers; and James (the son of Alphæus or Cleopas), Jude or Lebbæus, and Matthew (if he and Levi were the same, and there be but one Alphæus) and Simon, appear to have been brothers. Compare Matth. xiii, 55; Mark ii, 14; Mark vi, 3; John xix, 25; Acts i, 13. The four last, too, appear to have been first cousins of Jesus, their father Alphæus or Cleopas having married Mary the sister of Jesus' mother; and one of them—James—is called (putting, as was not unusual among the Jews, the nearer for the more distant relationship) "the Lord's brother," Gal. i, 19.—*James the son of Zebedee.* His mother's name was Salome, and she was one of those devoted women who followed Jesus from Galilee, and beheld his crucifixion, Matth. xxvii, 56; Mark xv, 40, and xvi. 1. This James was called the Greater, to distinguish him from James the son of Alphæus, who was called the Less. He was put to the sword by Herod Agrippa.—*And John his brother.* The writer of the Gospel, to whom are also ascribed the three Epistles of John and the Revelation. James and John were called *Boanerges*, a corrupted form most probably of some Hebrew compound signifying "sons of thunder," or "of tempest." Some suppose this cognomen was given these Apostles from the fervour and impetuosity of their eloquence; and others from their desire to call down fire from heaven on that Samaritan village which refused to receive our Lord, as related by Luke ix, 51—56.

3. *Philip*, of Bethsaida, the residence also of Peter and Andrew: John i, 44.—*Bartholomew.* Bartholomæus, son of Tholomæus, as Bartimæus (Mark x, 46) is son of Timæus, and Barjona son of Jona. This, then, was not the personal name, but the patronymic, or name derived from the *father* of this Apostle. Now, Nathaniel is not mentioned by name in this list of the Apostles; and yet that he was one is almost certain from the mention of him in John i, 43—51, and John xxi, 2. It is not without reason, therefore, believed that the Bartholomew, or son of Tholomæus, here spoken of, was Nathaniel; for the three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who speak of Bartholomew, do not speak of Nathaniel, while the fourth, who speaks of Nathaniel, says nothing of Bartholomew.—*Thomas*, the Hebrew word for *Twin;* whence, in Greek, he was called Didymus: John xx, 24, xxi, 2. He is known in the Gospel history for his incredulity in reference to the resurrection, and for his earnest confession when convinced.—*Matthew.* Believed to be the same as Levi, the son of Alphæus, of whose calling there is an account, Mark ii, 14 and 15, agreeing with that of Matthew by himself, Matth. ix, 9.—*The Publican*, to distinguish him from some other person of the same name. His business was to collect the toll or rate on passengers over the Sea of Galilee. The publicans (or collectors of the *public* revenue) had tenements or booths erected at the foot of bridges, at the mouths of rivers, or by the sea-shore, where they took the toll. On receiving payment they gave a ticket containing two large letters, which exempted the person who held it from any additional charge when he reached the other side of the water.—*James, the son of Alphæus.* Called, for distinction, *James the Less* (Mark xv, 40), our Lord's cousin. —*Lebbæus.* He is called *Judas*, or Jude, Luke vi, 16; and here, Thaddeus.

4. *Simon the Canaanite.* This appellation, given to distinguish this Simon from Simon Peter, is supposed by some to shew that he was of the town of Cana; but the form employed in that case would have been "Canite" or "Canean." He is called "Simon Zelotes," or Simon the Zealot, in Luke vi, 15, and Acts i, 13, to which the Hebrew word Kana, and the Chaldaic Kanean, correspond in meaning: to these a Greek termination was given, making the word Kananites, and a Greek translation, making it Zelotes. From this it would appear that, as Matthew had been a tax-gatherer, and gave up that employment to follow Jesus, and Peter had been a fisherman, and gave it up for the same purpose, so Simon had been in political profession one of the zealots (frantic resisters of the Roman power), who were continually summoning the people by outbursts of violence to regain their political freedom; and that now he had thrown aside these vain efforts, attached himself to Jesus, and was learning under him

The Apostolic Commission.

5. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

6. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.[b]

7. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[b] Matthew xv, 24.

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a fuller and more abiding freedom both for himself and for his country. The Zealots seem to have determined immediately and bloodily to avenge every insult or supposed insult put upon themselves, their country, or their religion, and to have been careless to what risks and losses they exposed their countrymen in seeking this revenge. Simon, it is to be supposed, became dissatisfied with their principles and disgusted with their conduct.

Judas Iscariot. From Kerioth, a village in Judah, mentioned Joshua xv, 25. This explanation of the name Iscariot is confirmed by the fact that some MSS., at John vi, 71, and xii, 4, instead of Iscariot, read "from Karuot."

Of the above twelve Apostles we know that Peter was born at Bethsaida, lived at Capernaum, gained his living by fishing, and was a married man. He was warmly devoted to Jesus, although, when questioned in the palace of the high priest, his fears got the better of his fidelity, and he denied having any knowledge of him. Of this cowardice he repented bitterly, and became one of the most courageous preachers and defenders of the Christian cause. We find, from Gal. ii, 11, that he was at Antioch, and his first Epistle is addressed to persons scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia (I Pet. i, 1), which makes it probable that he preached in many parts of Asia Minor. It is said, though on uncertain authority, that he perished at Rome, being placed on the cross with his head downwards, a position which he himself desired, as he was not worthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Master. The celebrated painter Rubens has taken this tradition as the subject of a noble painting, which is preserved and exhibited at a church in Cologne. Of Andrew, Peter's brother, little is known; but it is said that he preached in Asia Minor and in Northern Greece, and that he was put to death in Achaia, on a kind of cross called, from him, St. Andrew's cross, which continues in the representations of him to be his peculiar sign or symbol.—*James* must have been very active in the cause of the Christian faith, as he attracted the anger of Herod Agrippa, who beheaded him: Acts xii, 1—2.—*John* appears to have been the youngest of those who joined themselves to Jesus, and to have survived him the longest. He is spoken of by St. Paul (Gal. ii, 9) as one of the Pillars of the Church. The chief scene of his labours was Ephesus, and he is said by Eusebius to have lived till A.D. 100. His temperament, which in his earlier years was ardent and excitable, seems in later life to have softened into the utmost affectionateness and gentleness. He was the most devotional and spiritual of the Apostles. Of Philip, Bartholomew, and Thomas, nothing is known beyond the few allusions to them in the Scripture. There is a tradition that Matthew preached the Gospel in Ethiopia.—*James* the Less held an important position in the early church (Acts xv, 13; and xxi, 18). He advocated the continuance of the Jewish ceremonial law, and was thus opposed to St. Paul, who was unwilling to subject the new converts to this burden, especially when Gentiles. Of his end we learn from Josephus that "Ananus (or Ananias) assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ (his name was James) and some of his companions: and when he had made an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned."—Of *Judas* or *Thaddæus* (to whom the Epistle of Jude is ascribed), and of Simon the Canaanite, little is known. Of *Judas Iscariot* too much.

5. *Go not into the way of the Gentiles.* The Jews called all foreigners *Gentiles,* or inhabitants of the *gentes* or nations. Just as the Greeks used to call all nations but their own *barbarians,* meaning by that term originally all persons who could not speak the Greek language, or spoke it imperfectly. The word then came to mean, as now, rude, savage and illiterate people; and the Romans imitated the Greeks, and called all nations, but themselves and the Greeks, barbarians. Our Lord here commands his Apostles to go and teach their own countrymen, in the first place, and not foreigners, or even Samaritans. Afterwards, he commands them to preach to all the world. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations:" Matt. xxviii, 19.—*The Samaritans.* Samaria lay between Galilee and Judæa. Though such near neighbours, the Jews and Samaritans were enemies. The reasons of this hostility are numerous, and go far back into their history. First, there was the di-

The Apostolic Commission.

8. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils [*dæmons*]: freely ye have received, freely give.[c]

9. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

10. Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor

c Luke x, 3—12.

vision of the tribes into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel (Samaria being the capital of Israel) and the continual jealousies and even wars that took place between them, under opposed and rival kings. (See the account of the separation of the tribes, 1 Kings, xii). Then there was the change made at the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, about 700 B.C., when a large immigration of heathens from the east took the place of those Israelites who had been slain or taken into captivity. This made of the inhabitants of the country a mixed race, and still farther alienated the Jews of pure descent from them. (See the account, II Kings, xvii). Then came the third cause of hostility, the latest and most active. When the remains of the kingdom of Judah came back from their captivity, about 530 B.C., and again about 450 B.C. and began to rebuild their temple at Jerusalem, the Samaritans wished to join with them, and were refused permission. (See the account of this, in Ezra iv). Upon which the inhabitants of Samaria built a temple and had a worship of their own on Mount Gerizim. A rivalry arose between the two temples, and on one occasion, about 100 B.C., the Jews destroyed the temple on Mount Gerizim. Religious and national prejudices thus grew up so strongly between the two nations that the individuals belonging to them disliked intercourse with each other; and thus, as in John iv, we find it truly descriptive of their condition, that "the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans." Jesus, as the great Healer of human evils, and the Prince of Peace, took every opportunity of shewing the unreasonableness of this animosity, and of fostering kinder feelings between the two nations. The parable of the good Samaritan is an instance of this: and though he now forbids the Apostles to go into any city of the Samaritans, it was only that they might give their instructions first to their own countrymen, by whom, too, they would be received with less prejudice, and for whose welfare they would themselves naturally feel a more immediate anxiety. It is in this spirit of tender regard, and as it were affectionate preference, that Jesus calls them, in the next verse (in reference to their political discontent, their social disorganization, and their religious prejudices and errors) "*the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*"

7. *The kingdom of heaven.* The reign of God and of heavenly principles in the hearts of men is about to commence.

9. *Brass.* Copper coins were most likely here intended. *Brass* is a mixture of copper and zinc: the best brass consists of four parts of copper to one of zinc.—*Purses.* The usual garment of the East being bound round the loins or middle by a girdle, thus makes in the bosom a receptacle, in which purses or other articles may be put. Sometimes the purse is attached to the girdle, or carried under it.

10. *Scrip.* A travelling pouch or wallet, hung about the neck, in which victuals were put.—*Two coats.* They were not to take a change of apparel.—*Nor shoes,* but be content with the common sandals of their ordinary wear, which they had on probably at the moment, and which did not cover the whole foot, but consisted of *soles* fastened across the foot and round the ankle.—*Nor yet staves.* Probably, the word *two* has to be understood in each clause. They were not to take two garments (coats), or two pair of shoes, or *two staves,* but to set off equipped very much as they were. Men are often met with, in the East, travelling on foot, with a walking-staff in one hand, while another stick held over the shoulder (in the way common everywhere) supports the scrip or bag. As the Apostles were to carry no wallet, the latter staff would be useless. The walking-staff they seem to have express permission to take, Mark vi, 8, 9, "and commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only: no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse; but be shod with sandals, and not put on two coats.—*For the workman is worthy of his meat.* The whole of these directions bear upon one point. The Apostles were not to provide as for an ordinary journey, since they would be supplied with every thing, as they needed it, by those to whom they were sent to preach. This was because they would be sent among those who would hear them gladly. But when about to go among those who would persecute them, or at least would not honour them for their work's sake, this command was revoked. In Luke xxii, 35, 36, our Lord says, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? and they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a purse let

yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

11. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

12. And when ye come into an [*the*] house, salute it.

13. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

15. Verily I say unto you, It shall [*will*] be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.[d]

16. ¶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

[d] Matthew xi, 22.

him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." This last direction must have been only designed to shew the dangers they were about to encounter, and the necessity there would be, according to ordinary conceptions, of self-defence. For when, soon after, Peter actually uses a sword, our Lord forbids it, and says, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," Matth. xxvi, 52. The same distinction between friendly and hostile hearers is observed still. When we ourselves hear the preachers of Christianity, we provide for their necessities; but when we send them into heathen countries or into unfriendly communities, we bid them not trust to the willingness of those, among whom they go, to supply their wants, but assist them as missionaries, to provide themselves with purse and scrip and raiment. The minister of religion has his work to do as well as other men, and must have the time secured to him for this purpose, or he cannot do it effectually. It is a mistake to suppose that a man must devote the principal part of his time and attention to learn and to exercise properly a mechanical or a professional calling, but that he need only give the odds and ends of his leisure and application, such as he can save from other employments, to so high and anxious and exceedingly difficult a task as the spiritual influence, instruction, and guidance of human beings. For this reason, therefore, though their work, when conscientiously and industriously performed, is not one for which they can be paid in kind, or in silver and gold, it is one for the proper prosecution of which they should be supplied with the requisite leisure and freedom from ordinary employments. The minister of religion should have what will support him: the workman is at least worthy of his meat. See I Cor. ix.

11. *And there abide till ye go thence.* As in the instructions to the seventy, Luke x, 7, "Go not from house to house." To avoid the appearance of discontent, vagabondism, or favouritism.

12. *Salute it.* Pronounce the *Salaam*, or invocation of *Peace*, upon it. As in Luke x, 5, "Peace be to this house." This implied all other good wishes. It was a saying of the Rabbins, "Great is Peace, for all other blessings are comprehended in it."

14. *Shake off the dust of your feet.* The Jews considered themselves defiled by the dust of a heathen country; and therefore to shake off the dust of any city of Israel was emblematically pronouncing it polluted, and no longer a part of the "holy land." The Apostles in some instances literally followed this counsel, as Paul and Barnabas at Antioch in Pisidia, Acts xiii, 51. So Paul again at Corinth "shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles, Acts xviii, 6.

15. *It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha.* In the day of retribution for all human shortcomings and misdeeds, this shall be reckoned as one; and inasmuch as it is a greater wrong to reject the teachings of Christ and his Apostles than it was to neglect the warnings of Abraham and Lot, the former shall receive the greater condemnation.

16. *Wise as serpents.* "In mythology the serpent is a symbol of two distinct sets of qualities—the one good, the other bad. Its skill, power, and secrecy of action, made it an object of wonder. These qualities were especially exemplified in its apparent return to youth on the casting of the skin. Hence wisdom, health, and vigour, were symbolised under the figure of a serpent. But, as these qualities were often exerted for the injury of human beings, so the same animal became a

17. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;[e]

18. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against [*to*] them and the Gentiles.

[e] Matthew xxiv, 9—14. Mark xiii, 9—13. Luke xxi, 12—17.

type of wickedness; for knowledge undirected by goodness is mischievous cunning." Hence the serpent appears both as a good and a bad power. In the former character we find it in the Hindoo mythology represented as an emblem of the productive power; among the Greeks it was, as the emblem of wisdom, the presiding and guardian power of the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. In the Egyptian theology the serpent appears as an image of the healing art. So in the book of Numbers, xxi, 8, a brazen serpent is set on a pole as an antidote to the devastations of the fiery serpents which affected the people. It is as the representative of these higher qualities that our Lord recommends its imitation to the Apostles, who were about to be surrounded with difficulties requiring the exercise of their utmost skill, energy, and discretion.

17. *The councils*, or courts of judicature, established for the administration of the laws in every town. The chief of these was the Sanhedrim or Council of Seventy, which held its sittings at Jerusalem, and before which the Apostles (in accordance with this warning of our Lord's) were brought. See Acts iv, 5—22; v, 33—42; vi, 12—15; xxii, 30.—*Will scourge you in their synagogues.* "Scourging was a very common punishment, and was inflicted with cords, rods, or thongs. The delinquent was stripped bare to the loins, and bound by both arms to a low pillar. Legally, not more than forty stripes could be given: but serious misdeeds brought in practice much heavier punishments." Indeed, the actual practice and customs of the Jews are too frequently deduced from the provisions of their law. In every nation there are obsolete or neglected or violated laws; and so, doubtless, was it among the Jews: and we are not therefore to conclude, when we find a *law* prescribed in the Pentateuch, that we have in it also a *custom* observed in the time of our Lord. Here, however, the letter of the law seems to have been kept in mind in the cases to which it was supposed to apply; for in II Cor. xi, 24, St. Paul says, "of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one." The flogging was given in an open court, before assessors. As long as the punishment lasted the president repeated the words found in Deut. xxviii, 58, "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God." When it was ended, he uttered the words of Psalm lxxviii, 38, "But he being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath." The accompaniment of admonition during the actual infliction is seldom productive of any good effect upon the mind: the punishment if justly inflicted, and sufficiently understood, is itself the admonition. But the Jewish government being a theocracy, or government by God, the punishments were regarded not as the offspring of human law, but as directly inflicted by God, and thus He was introduced as assigning in his own words and person the reasons of their infliction and their cessation. It is greatly to be feared that the utterance of such sentiments at such a time would only tend to make religion itself odious to the criminal, and, if he regarded God as really inflicting the scourging, turn his feelings of hatred from the human to the Divine inflicter of the punishment. These passages it would have been well for the *judge* to keep in his mind while inflicting and defining the penalty; but they could exercise no salutary influence on him who bore the penalty, because he might sometimes really, and frequently in his own opinion, be submitting to a punishment that was mistaken and unjust, and at any rate apparently harsh and severe. Our Lord himself suffered under this punishment, Matt. xxvii, 26, and possibly had these very words repeated to him—how inapplicably! The *synagogues* or assemblies here spoken of were most likely courts of justice. This seems to be the meaning of Luke xii, 11, "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and magistrates and powers, take ye no (anxious thought) how or what thing ye shall answer." Thus also with Acts xxii, 19, to account for the use of the expression, we are told that the three magistrates presiding in such courts were chosen from the principal members of the synagogues.

18. *Governors and kings.* As Peter and John before Annas and Caiaphas, Acts iv, 5—8; and Paul before Felix, Acts xxiv; and Festus and Agrippa, Acts xxv; and many of the primitive Christians subsequently, before

19. But when they deliver you up, take no thought [*be not over-careful*] how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20. For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22. And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

23. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

24. The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord.[f]

25. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,

[f] Luke vi, 40. John xiii, 16, and xv, 20.

governors of provinces, kings who were tributary to the Roman government, and before the emperors themselves.—*For a testimony to them.* By their public trials, the Apostles and primitive Christians bore most valuable witness to their faith before the world.

19. *It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* They were not to be alarmed or over-anxious about the defence of themselves they might be able to make on such awful occasions; they should be supplied by their Father above with wisdom and courage sufficient for their needs. And how amply this promise was redeemed, the readers of the defences of themselves and their faith uttered by Stephen, and Peter, and Paul, need not to be informed.

21. *The children shall rise up against their parents.* A striking allusion to the manner of bearing witness in courts of justice, where they stand up before the court to give their evidence, as we should say, "rise up in their seats." This is the kind of hostility indicated—*information* against their nearest relatives, whose habits and opinions their intimacy gave them an opportunity of knowing.

22. *He that endureth to the end shall be saved.* The Gospel rewards, as all the highest and best rewards, are peculiarly reserved for the persevering. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end," Heb. iii, 14. So here our Lord says that he that beareth the hatred and persecution attendant on discipleship to Christ, and endureth faithful to the end, shall be a partaker of his salvation. The salvation by Christ is manifold; but as we learn from Matt. i, 21, that he was called Jesus (or Saviour) because he should "save his people from their sins," this saving from sin and the sorrowful consequences of sin is the chief salvation that is by Christ. The faithful disciple of Christ, whatever trials he might endure on earth and in time, would be saved to the bosom of his God and happiness unspeakable in heaven and in eternity.

23. *Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, &c.* If the Apostles were persecuted in one city, so as to have their work impeded, there was no occasion for them to wait there; they might pass on to another, that would more gladly receive them: for let them pass over those cities as quickly as they would, the Son of Man should come, the old religions of the world should be shaken, and the light of the Gospel should have burst forth even upon heathen nations, before the cities of the chosen people had been visited throughout. Christ employs here one of those mysterious phrases, to which his hearers, at the time, might not be able to attach the full and correct meaning, to the true interpretation of which subsequent events afford us some help, but which, after all, we of this age have to leave in something of that enigmatical, parabolic, and metaphorical obscurity which surrounds them still with a halo of rich and suggestive indeed, but not strictly or certainly definable, meaning. Instead of the explanation given here, some prefer regarding the words as alluding to an expectation cherished by our Lord, and through him by the Apostles, that he should come a second time into the world, to take possession of his spiritual kingdom in great glory within that generation.

25. *Beelzebub*, or Beelzebul, called (Matth. xii, 24) the Prince of the devils or dæmons; literally the Dung-God, a term of contempt applied by the Jews to the supposed chief

how much more *shall they call* them of his household?[g]

26. Fear them not, therefore; for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.[h]

27. What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the housetops.

28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [*gehenna*].

29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.[i]

31. Fear ye not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

32. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.[k]

34. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.[l]

35. For I am come to set a man at

g Matthew xii, 24. Mark iii, 22. Luke xi, 15; xii, 2—12.
h Mark iv, 22. Luke viii, 17.
i Luke xxi, 18.
k Luke ix, 26.
l Luke xii, 49—53.

animating Spirit of idol rites and worship. They called worshipping in the idol temples, stretching forth their hands in a dunghill. Nothing could exceed, therefore, the contemptuousness of their intention in calling Christ Beelzebul, and in attributing his works to the influence of this god.

26. *Fear them not, therefore, &c.* But notwithstanding all their malice, fear them not; for they shall not prevent the exposure of sin and error, or the publication of truth and right: *there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed.*

27. *What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.* In the synagogue service, the doctor who explained the law had always an interpreter by him, in whose ears he softly whispered what he said; and this interpreter spoke aloud to the congregation what had been thus whispered to him. The Scriptures being written in an older form of Hebrew, they required explanation so as to be intelligible to those who only knew the common spoken language of the time. The houses in Judea were *flat-roofed*, with a balustrade round about, and these roofs were used for the purpose of taking the air, for prayer and meditation, and it would appear from this place, for making public announcements. As there are no bells among the Turks, a crier proclaims all times of public worship from the housetops. In connection with these uses of the roofs of houses, it will be interesting to examine the following passages, Deut. xxii, 8; Joshua ii, 6; Neh. viii, 16; Isai. xv, 3; Jer. xxxii, 29; Acts x, 9.

28. *Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell* [*gehenna*]. The worst that their enemies could do was to destroy the body; but the Being whom they served, and whom chiefly, and alone supremely, they had cause to reverence and to fear, had absolute command over their immortal souls as well as their mortal bodies: "he could create and he destroy"—he could punish and he could save. Gehenna, or the land and valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, where the refuse of the city and sometimes dead bodies were burnt with fire (as formerly heathen and murderous sacrifices had been offered there) was used by accommodation or figure to denote also the punishments of futurity, the destruction, as by the discipline of fire, of the vices of the soul.

29. *A farthing.* An *as.* The Roman *as* was the tenth part of a Denarius, which was about 7½d. The *as*, then, was strictly three of our farthings. But it is used here as our farthing (which is literally a *fourthing*, the *fourth* part of a penny) is used among us, for any very trifling amount. We say a thing is not worth a farthing, when we mean it is of inappreciable value.

32. *Whosoever shall confess me before men, &c.* If we cannot say before our tempting, ridiculing, or persecuting fellow-creatures, wanting us to violate the law of our consciences, "Jesus is my Master," how can we expect Jesus to say of us before the Universe and the Almighty Father, "This is my disciple?"

34. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth.* And yet the song with which we are told his birth was greeted was, "Glory to

variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36. And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

37. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.[m]

38. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.[n]

40. ¶ He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.[o]

41. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42. And whosoever shall give to

m Luke xiv, 26, 27.

n Mark viii, 34—38. Luke ix, 23—25.
o Luke x, 16. John xiii, 20.

God in the highest, on earth Peace, goodwill to men." This is the ultimate object, and tendency of Christ's mission; but as the virtuous man, though designed by God to be also the happy man, has notwithstanding to pass through many trials and struggles to his happiness and his virtue, so Christianity, though leading men to their final good and joy, leads them through many conflicts and dangers to it. Some of the noblest results, and some of the highest gratifications to which we reach are, through more or less of effort and tribulation at the time, not joyous but rather grievous, nevertheless they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. These declarations of our Lord are verified by all history—verified in the persecutions of professors of Christianity, in which the nearest relations have taken part against each other—and in the wars of religion, in which nations, on the ground or on the pretence of zeal for the Gospel, have taken up the sword against nations. The evil passions of men will find some vent, and even religion can only by degrees subdue them; nay, religion is often made the pretext for their exhibition. In ignorant, prejudiced, or wicked minds, the holiest and wisest things will be an occasion of the greatest indignation and violence. These good things are not on that account to be withheld, but must go forth to contend with the bad things till evil be overcome of good.

37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* Notwithstanding, he who prefers to listen to the entreaty, or to consult the worldly welfare of father or mother, or any other relation, however near and dear, in preference to confessing the truth and obeying me, is not worthy of me.

38. *And he that taketh not his cross.* He that is not willing to bear trials of any kind, even unto death, for the sake of my religion, is not worthy of me. The expression is in allusion to the custom of causing the criminal to bear his own cross to the place of his execution. This was attempted in the case of Jesus, but he apparently was too weak to accomplish the whole distance: see John xix, 17; Matth. xxvii, 32.

39. *He that findeth his life shall lose it, &c.* Life does not simply mean breathing and moving, eating, drinking, and sleeping. Life, in its highest acceptation, means vitality in mind and soul. A man, then, by base compliances and on unworthy terms may save his bodily life, and yet lose all that exercise of his highest faculties in freedom, and all that independence of mind, and integrity of conscience, which to a true man are essential to life. He may thus find or keep one sort of life, and lose another and better. And, conversely, a man may lose this corporeal, muscular, moving and breathing life, and yet, preserving his soul untainted for immortality, in reality preserve his life. A Roman poet (Juvenal) points out this distinction admirably when he says, "Deem it the greatest disgrace and wrong to prefer breath before honour, and for the sake of life to lose all reason for living."

41. *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, &c.* A prophet not in the more limited sense of a foreteller of future events, but in that of preacher or teacher of righteousness. Perhaps there is a series designed here. He that receiveth me, receiveth God. He that receiveth you, receiveth me. He that receiveth any whom you send, receiveth you. Thus he that receiveth, for the Apostle's sake, an apostolic man, receiveth an apostle. He that receiveth for Christ's sake an Apostle, receiveth Christ. And he that receiveth, for God's sake, Jesus Christ, receiveth God: and

drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in nowise lose his reward.[p]

CHAPTER XI.

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

2. Now, when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

3. And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

4. Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

5. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

6. And blessed is *he* whosoever shall not be offended [*find a stumbling-block, or be scandalized*] in me.

7. ¶ And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

p Mark ix, 41.

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the reward of each shall be accordingly, even extending to him who should offer the simplest refreshment and support, a cup of cold water, to the humblest disciples (one of these little ones)—even he should have his reward.

CHAPTER XI.

1. *Thence.* From the place (probably Capernaum, or its neighbourhood) where he had given the Apostles their commission. Our Lord renewed his own labours when he had despatched the Apostles on theirs. This verse evidently belongs to the preceding subject, and should have formed the last verse of chap. x, and chap. xi should have begun with the 2d verse, "Now when John." The division of the New Testament into verses was made by the celebrated printer and critic, Robert Stephens, in the middle of the 16th century after Christ. The division into chapters had been made in the 13th century, but sometimes, as in the present case, without due regard to the connection.

2. *Now when John had heard in the prison,* of Macherus, where he was imprisoned for the cause explained Matth. xiv.

3. *Art thou he that should come.* Art thou the expected Messiah, or have we him still to look for? Why did John send his disciples to ask this question? was it for his own sake or for theirs? Scarcely for *their* sakes, because we learn from Luke vii, 18, that the rumour of Christ's wonderful works, leading to the wide belief that God had visited his people, had filled Judæa, reached John's disciples, and was conveyed by them to himself. This only confirmed their master's previous testimony to Christ, and they were not likely to regard any declarations of Jesus himself as more convincing than that testimony. Besides, the answer from Christ is addressed to John, not to them, as it would have been had they been the persons who required convincing. Then did John the Baptist send to ask this question for his own sake, and if so, why? Had he not already, according to St. John's account, declared Christ the Lamb of God? Had he not, according to the statements of this Gospel, heard Jesus at his baptism declared God's beloved Son? Does not Jesus in this chapter vindicate him from the charge of inconstancy and levity? v. 7. What need had he of further evidence to confirm him in his previous conviction than that afforded to him by the facts mentioned to him in the prison, in reference to the career of Jesus? Some suppose that, undelivered from his captivity, he doubted whether Christ could be the Messiah, and wished to be re-assured. Others suppose that he sent this message in order to stimulate Jesus to the exercise of his authority in his liberation. Others suppose that, believing in the temporal messiahship of Jesus, he wished by this message to urge him to vindicate to himself his true authority, and to take possession of his kingdom. This last view is said to be supported by Christ's reference to the nature of his works—so humane, so unworldly and spiritual—by his implied rebuke of John for his doubts (v. 6), and by his declaration that John the Baptist, though the greatest of prophets preceding the annunciation of Christianity, thus shewed himself inferior in spiritual apprehension and position to the least instructed Christian disciple. The question is, perhaps, one of the most nicely-balanced, and one of the most difficult of positive decision, which meets us

Christ's description of John the Baptist.

8. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

9. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

10. For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence [*is forced*], and the violent [*the forcers*] take it by force [*carry it off*].

13. For all the prophets and the law prophesied [*continued to teach*] until John.

14. And if ye will receive *it*, this

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in this Gospel. It seems impossible to regard the announcer and fore-runner of the kingdom as requiring to be convinced of a claim which so many others had already acknowledged; and unlikely that he should be furnished with the means of judgment in a manner so nearly resembling a rebuke. On the other hand, the conjecture that the question was asked for the sake of his disciples (who, we are then to understand, would receive Christ's testimony, but not their master's) seems improbable. If, however, we look upon this as a question put by ourselves, or any doubting heart, and receive the answer, we shall profit more thus than by following out the subtleties of the critical question, interesting and not unimportant though that in itself be.

9. *More than a prophet.* In John the Baptist you went out to see more than a simple religious teacher and reformer. Just as that messenger who goes before a monarch to announce and to prepare for his own arrival in person is greater than ordinary king's messengers, conveying merely the monarch's commands: so John the Baptist was not simply one of the long series of religious teachers and prophets sent by God in the course of his providence to the Jewish nation, but the special messenger by which the coming of the world's spiritual king was announced and prepared for; he of whom it is written, "Behold I send," &c., v. 10: see the words in Mal. iii, 1. Similar language is employed Isai. xl, 3.

11. *Among them that are born of women.* A periphrasis or roundabout expression for *men*. There has been no greater prophet yet than John the Baptist, nevertheless, *he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he;* he that is even imperfectly initiated into the doctrine and hopes of Christ has within him the seed of a loftier tree of life than that of whose fruit John could alone eat. Or there may be contained in these words an implied contrast between the flesh and the spirit, between the expectants of a temporal and the expectants of a heavenly kingdom; and the words, *they that are born of women* may, perhaps, signify those that are born of the flesh, who preach the duties and hopes of this life; and those, *in the kingdom of heaven*, may signify those who are born of the spirit, who have been initiated into all the joys and privileges of spiritual and immortal beings, who see in this life merely the beginning of a better, in earth merely the vestibule to heaven, and who, therefore, care little for those things that pamper or that kill the body, but are chiefly concerned about those that nourish or destroy the soul. This is regarding John's ministry as one of preparation merely — a baptism of water to repentance, and Christ's ministry the completion of John's—as a baptism of the holy spirit and of fire into a new spiritual creation, of which the pure love of God, and the fervid aspiration after holiness for its own sake, are the characteristics. John was the greatest in the first division of prophets; the humblest apostle or disciple of Christ was greater than he, as belonging to the second.

12. *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.* Since John began his ministry of preparation, the kingdom of heaven, whose approach he came to announce, has been liable to all kinds of misunderstanding, opposition, and hindrance. In the very person of John it was at that time suffering violence. Even some of its professed friends would urge and press it into an unseemly attitude of worldliness and conflict. Men thus seize it with both hands as it were—lay hold of it with violence—and force it. This rendering of our Lord's meaning is confirmed by the tone of verses 17—24, where, in addition to

is Elias [*Elijah*], which was for to come.

15. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.[a]

16. ¶ But whereunto [*to what*] shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows [*companions*],

17. And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil [*dæmon*].

19. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans [*tax-gatherers*] and sinners. But wisdom is justified of [*by*] her children.[b]

20. ¶ Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:[c]

21. Woe unto thee, [*alas! for thee*] Chorazin! woe unto thee [*alas! for thee*] Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at [*in*] the day of judgment, than for you.

23. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell [*hades*]: for if

a Luke vii, 19—30. *b* Luke vii, 31—35. *c* Luke x, 13—15.

the violence, the perversity of the nation is lamented.

13—15. *For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John, &c.* The law of Moses and the prophets were your instructors until John came; but now he has superseded them, and is himself the last in the Judaic series. He is the second *Elijah*, whom ye have been taught to expect; the completion of the old dispensation, and the announcer and forerunner of the new. Let him that hears my words attentively weigh them.

16—19. *Children sitting in the markets.* In all ages children have been fond of imitating the processions which they observe in the streets, whether civil, military, or funereal. Here the children of Palestine are represented as "*playing*" at funerals and festivals, the more energetic and amiable endeavouring to interest and amuse their little companions by conducting the game. And just as among these children the dull or the morose are dissatisfied with both, will join neither in the joyful nor in the mournful entertainment, so it was with the men of that generation, who, as an excuse for not accepting the invitations of either the Messiah or his forerunner, cavilled at their outward habits of life, blaming those of the latter because they were rigid and severe, and those of the former because they were affable and mild; denouncing the one as a madman, and the other as a glutton.—*Wisdom is justified of* [*by*] *her children.* Wisdom is justified by the result in the means and instruments she employs. She knows what she is doing; and this selection of, and variety in, the modes of her ministrations is deliberate and well-judged.

Chorazin-Bethsaida. These towns, as well as *Capernaum*, were in the neighbourhood of the lake, though great uncertainty attaches now to their precise sites. Many souls in all these places were doubtless brought to Jesus. Bethsaida alone, we know, yielded three Apostles. But the inhabitants at large were deaf to his heavenly voice. And while lamenting their hardness of heart, he says, that they had heard such lessons and seen such works as might have been sufficient to redeem great heathen cities, such as Tyre and Sidon, from their vices, and even have saved Sodom and Gomorrha, in the olden time, from perishing in their iniquities.

22. *More tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment.* For they can plead that they had not had and neglected such warnings and instructions as you. The spirit of the passage is the same as that of Matth. xii, 41, 42: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation," &c.

23. *And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell*

the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25. ¶ At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, [*I assent unto thee*] O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because [*in that*] thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent [*understanding or skilful*], and hast revealed them unto babes.[d]

26. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man [*none*] knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man [*any*] the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will [*willeth to*] reveal *him*.

28. ¶ Come unto me, all *ye* that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

d Luke x, 21, 22.

[*hades*]. Strong figurative expressions are here employed to signify the great worldly prosperity and pride of Capernaum (which was a very flourishing mercantile city), and to contrast it with the condition to which it should be reduced (to which it has been reduced) of being swept (in the uncertainty of its very site) from the face of the earth, and buried in the abyss of things that appear not. *Hades*, means strictly the place of the departed, whether good or bad, and generally a place below the circle of visible things—the place of the hidden and unseen, and therefore it is sometimes, when the connection points it out, properly translated *the grave*. There is a grave of nations and cities, as well as of men.

24. *More tolerable for the land of Sodom. It* had the examples of Lot and Abraham to admonish them, *thou* the works and words, and ministry of Christ.

25. *Thou hast hid these things.* In the midst of this expression of his grief and disappointment, Jesus bursts out into a confession of his entire and thankful acquiescence in the will of his heavenly Father, who, though he has permitted these things to be hidden from the great, and (as they deem themselves) the wise of the world, has made them known to the humble minds and hearts around him, to babes: as he called his disciples, at the close of the last chapter, *his little ones*.

All things are delivered unto me of my Father, &c. This follows beautifully upon the apparent complaint of the imperfect effect of his ministry upon the Galilean cities, and is intended in continuance of the tone of acquiescence begun in the 25th verse. He there acknowledges the entire wisdom of God in the reception which He had ordained his mission to have. He here declares his own possession of all things needed or desired. As his Apostle after him in temporal things had all things and abounded; so in spiritual matters, and in matters appertaining to his kingdom, he confesses that all things have been delivered to, or given him: and his acquiescence and absolute agreement with his heavenly Father both in the objects and in the mode of achieving them are so perfect, that none can know the mind of the Son but the Father, and none the Spirit of the Father but the Son, and those to whom the Son shall make that spirit known. That is, he and the Father are one, and the faithful Apostles one with them.

28. *Come unto me, &c.* If there be any immediate connection between these verses and the preceding part of the Chapter, we may suppose that our Lord, after reminding himself that his words were not to the wise and prudent, the learned and self-satisfied, nor to the worldly and the prosperous, the chief inhabitants of the flourishing Capernaum, but to the meek, the poor, the sorrowing—to babes—concludes his address by this invitation of unrivalled pathos and beauty.

30. *My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* Christ lays upon his disciple no formal, gratuitous burden, no tedious observances, no painful penances. With him every joy and sorrow, every work and service, have at least the dignity of reality. And though, therefore, he still imposes a yoke upon our impulsive liberty, and a burden upon the back of our effort, the yoke is at least more easily borne than that of the ceremonial ritualists of that day, and the burden has

The walk in the corn-fields.

CHAPTER XII.

AT that time Jesus went on the Sabbath-day through the corn [*fields*]; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.[a]

2. But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath-day.

3. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

a Mark ii, 23—28. Luke vi, 1—5.

The plucking of the corn justified.

4. How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

5. Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?

6. But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

7. But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have [*I desire*] mercy,

none of the wearing, galling, distressing character of the burden of sin and evil passions. In reducing us from the power of these, and bestowing upon us a religion of the spirit and the affections, Christ offers his followers a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light.

CHAPTER XII.

2. *That which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath-day.* The Jewish law provided, in Deut. xxiii, 25, "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn." It was not, therefore, a violation of the law of property to pluck the ears of corn; but as this was a species of bodily labour, the strict Jews declared that it was a violation of the law of the Sabbath, which forbad the Jews to do any manner of work. This was a superstitious, not a pious, observance of the Sabbath. It would but be one step further to declare it unlawful to put meat upon the table or lift it to the mouth, for these acts are a certain species of work. Perhaps, however, it was in a spirit of unkindness towards our Lord, rather than of superstition, that this accusation was preferred. To abstain from violating on the same day the laws of charity and of purity, of the government of the thoughts and of the tongue, would have been a better way of keeping a day holy than to abstain from plucking ears of corn when hungry. Young people, however, should remember, that what may be innocent enough in country places, or in an agricultural population, may be mischievous and wrong in the neighbourhood of towns and large villages. Where there are many fields and few people, the plucking a few ears of corn in passing or stepping off the footpath may do no perceptible damage; but where there are many people and few fields, these acts may no longer be innocent. It is not well to see the corn plucked and the green grass trodden down by successive groups of thoughtless boys on the sabbath: in so acting, they not only trespass, but take what is not their own.

4. *Did eat the shewbread.* In one of his flights from the persecutions and jealousies of Saul, David arrived way-worn and hungry at Nob, which lay close upon Jerusalem. The ark was there under the care of Ahimelech the Priest. On David's begging for refreshment, the Priest told him that he had nothing but the sacred bread, which was placed every week fresh on the table before the Lord, and was therefore called *shew-bread*, or "*shown* bread." As the bread was removed, and new loaves put in its place, the priests consumed it; but it was not given to ordinary persons. Under the circumstance, however, Ahimelech gave some of it to David, for he saw that it was better to violate a mere law of regulation and ceremonial order, than see David faint or die of hunger. See the directions about the shewbread, Levit. xxiv, 5—9.

5. *The priests in the temple profane the sabbath.* The sacrifices were not intermitted on the sabbath, and therefore the priests had to slay and prepare and sacrifice the victims on that day as well as on others. Hence the saying "There is no sabbatism (i. e. no sabbath-rest) at all in the temple." But they were blameless, because they did what the law required.

6. *Greater than the temple.* The above works being done in the temple justified them. The act of the disciples being done in the presence of Jesus was their justification. For here, says Jesus, is something greater than the temple.

7. *Mercy, and not sacrifice.* If ye had understood that God places works of mercy

and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day.

9. And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue:

10. ¶ And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.[b]

11. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out?

12. How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

13. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

14. ¶ Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council [*consulted together*] against him, how they might destroy him.

15. But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

16. And charged them that they should not make him known:

17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

18. Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well-pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew [*proclaim*] judgment to the Gentiles.

19. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

20. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

21. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust [*have hope*].

b Mark iii, 1—7. Luke vi, 6—12.

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and beneficence above works of sacrifice and observance, ye would not have charged those whose lives are spent in doing good with violating the laws of God.

8. *The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day.* And in truth the spirit of Jesus in his religion has abrogated, in the exercise of this authority, the old sabbath, or Saturday rest of the Jews, and substituted the observance of the first day of the week as a time, not of ceremonial inertness, but as a day of devout thought and active kindness; as a day on which man may call to mind, amidst the rack and hurry of the world, the truth of his own immortality and his duties and privileges as a spiritual being.

12. *How much better, &c.* The answer of Jesus is complete: You ask me, he says, whether it be lawful to relieve a man on the sabbath-day: your own usages allow you to relieve a beast on that day, and man is better than a beast. These questioners would have prevented the man from becoming whole, for the sake of keeping the day whole; thus, in their adherence to the letter of obedience, losing its spirit, and worshipping an idol of forms, instead of the God of mercies.

16. *That they should not make him known.* That they should not make his retirement, or the direction in which he was going, known to his enemies. This would have endangered his life at once, and precipitated the termination of his mission before his work was done. For he was not about to offer any resistance, when he should be seized upon; but, to fulfil the words of Isaiah, which might therefore be taken as descriptive of him,—that he should not strive, or raise a party or a battle-cry in the streets (Isai. xlii, 1—4).

18. *Shall shew [proclaim] judgment.* Shall proclaim to them that law and spirit by which they, as well as the Jews, should be judged.

20. *Smoking flax.* The linen or flaxen wick of a lamp in an expiring state, when the oil is all burnt away from it, and nothing is left but a snuff, sending out smoke. These figures are intended to convey the great tenderness with which Jesus should treat the weak and ignorant, whose good desires he would not stifle. "The bruised reed may recover itself if permitted to vegetate under a kindly heaven; and the life of the expiring lamp may be recovered by fresh oil." Such is Jesus to him who is ready to faint beneath the burden of life or the sorrow of sin.

Cure of the Dæmoniac.

22. ¶ Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil [*dæmon*], blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.[c]

23. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

24. But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, this *fellow* [*man*] doth not cast out devils [*dæmons*], but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils [*dæmons*].

25. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

Vindication of the means.

26. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

27. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils [*dæmons*], by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges.

28. But if I cast out devils [*dæmons*] by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

29. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil [*plunder*] his goods, except he first bind

c Luke xi, 14—26.

23. *The Son of David.* The Messiah, who was to be a descendant of David.

25. *Jesus knew their thoughts.* He saw what they were thinking about. He discerned at once the train of thought, of which the words they had uttered were an index.

26. *And if Satan cast out Satan.* Satan (or Adversary), Devil (or Calumniator), Beelzebul (or Dung-god), Prince of the Devils, of this world and of the powers of the air, are all various terms of hate and loathing, in which the Jews personified the principle of evil and untruth. The Pharisees here accuse our Lord of casting out dæmons (or the sicknesses and sufferings supposed to be caused by them), through the assistance of this evil power. Our Lord in a single sentence exposed the absurdity of this charge, by shewing that thus they would make the devil confer power upon another against himself—the means of destroying his own works. Besides, he adds, if deafness, dumbness, insanity, epilepsy, &c., can only be cured by the agency of the evil spirit, by what agency did the ordinary physicians or exorcists among themselves cure these disorders? Would they accuse all these persons of collusion with the devil?

27. *Your children, &c.* (See preceding verse.) Those who are of your own nation, been brought up in your own schools, been trained in your own (the Pharisaic) doctrines, and who profess to exorcise these dæmons and cure these diseases, by the means which they have learnt from you. Some of these persons, afterwards finding the influence which the name of Jesus had in the mouths of his Apostles, adopted this among their other incantations and remedies, as would appear from Luke ix, 49; and Acts xix, 13.

28. *By the spirit of God, &c.* But if, as they ought to have inferred from the holiness of the life and the benignity of the temper of Jesus, it was not by any malignant power, but, on the contrary, by the Divine spirit of love, that he was enabled to work his works of mercy, then they should begin to conclude that that Divine spirit was coming among them, appealing to their hearts and consciences in the person and ministry of Jesus, and should endeavour to render themselves meet for receiving him.

29. *Or else how can he enter, &c.* Another argument further to shew the unreasonableness of the accusation seems to occur to our Lord, as it were, suddenly, when he had completed the previous ones. Not only could he be in no league with Satan against himself, but he must, in such a case, have positive power over Satan, to be able thus to trespass on his domain, and undo his wicked and cruel works. For you cannot, he says, enter a strong man's house, and take away his goods, unless you first shew your superiority in strength to him by binding him and preventing his resistance or interference.

30. *He that is not with me, &c.* Probably a well-known proverb, or such as was certainly likely to become one when once uttered; by the use of which our Lord meant further to shew, first, that he who was scattering Satan's kingdom could not be for him; and, second, that his accusers, who, so far from facilitating and expediting his messianic work, were opposing it by every harsh and unjustifiable means in their power, were thus proving themselves *against* him, and against that great Power above, by whose aid he was what he was. Elsewhere, indeed (Luke ix, 50), the reverse of this proverb is put into the

Blasphemy or evil-speaking

the strong man? and then he will spoil [*plunder*] his house.

30. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

31. ¶ Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost

of the Spirit.

[*but the blasphemy of the Spirit*] shall not be forgiven unto men.[d]

32. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost [*Spirit*], it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.

[d] Luke xii. 10.

mouth of our Lord, "He that is not against us is for us," which is also true, though, perhaps, in a less unqualified sense than the proverb here used. It is true, that he who withholds his aid from a good work is retarding its progress, and thus may be said to be practically *against* it; but it is also true, that he who puts no difficulty in the way of a good work, and offers it no opposition, may be said to be favourable to it, and *for* it. Statements of material and sensible fact may always be made much more definitely than statements of ethical or moral fact. The varying emotions of the human mind, and actions of the human will, run into each other and become confused, so that it requires great judgment and discrimination to pronounce upon the character of dispositions or of actions, the nature of which greatly changes according to the elements with which they are combined. Thus, persons advancing both in age and in knowledge are usually less dogmatic and exclusive than persons of a narrower experience and a slenderer information. In studying the Bible, as all other books of instruction, much thought and comparison of principle with principle and passage with passage have to be employed before just judgments can be formed. To take each of the two sayings of our Lord here referred to in its independent, exclusive, and literal force, would be to place Jesus, the Gospel, and common sense, in contradiction to themselves and to each other. Truth is the result of many things, not of one; it is the fruit of much and varied labour, investigation, and thought; it is not offered to us as a gift upon a platter: it can only be eaten in the sweat of the brow.

31. *But the blasphemy against the holy spirit* [*the blasphemy of the spirit*]. The words *against* and *holy* are printed in italics in the Common Version, a sign which our honest translators used to shew when they had thought it necessary, for the sake of the meaning, to insert words in the translation which did not exist in the original text. Here, it will be observed, the words *against* and *holy* are inserted words, and the passage should be rendered "but the blasphemy (or evil-speaking) of the spirit shall not be forgiven." In verse 28 Jesus implied that he did his great works by "the spirit of God." In declaring that they were done by Beelzebul, the Pharisees spoke evil of or blasphemed that spirit by which they were done. Our Lord, then, means to call their attention to the great heinousness of this offensive charge. All ordinary evil-speaking we may forgive: if any man say a word against a fellow-mortal, frail and weak like himself, it may be pardoned; nay, our Lord adds, if any one say a word against himself even (verse 32), it shall be pardoned; but to malign the high and holy spirit of God, to say that the Almighty's works are the works of a devil, to blaspheme or speak evil of the Heavenly Father, is a more serious matter—is a more dreadful sin. This we cannot forgive. That the God of infinite mercy would not forgive upon repentance the creature who in blindness or hardness of heart had resisted his powers is not intended to be asserted in these words. This is one of the occasions when we have to use our faculties in reconciling individual statements with general truths. We know that God willeth not the death of any sinner, but had rather that he would repent, return, and live. But to a thoughtful person the difference will be obvious between the unkindness and insolence which may speak harshly and injuriously of a fellow-creature, and the impiety and hardness of heart which, resisting the plainest manifestations of God's love, shall even vilify and blaspheme that love. The first, bad as it is, may yet be forgiven; but the second—to employ phraseology in common use among ourselves, on whose literal and eternal fulfilment, however, we do not at all insist, when using it—the second is *unpardonable*.

32. *Neither in this world nor in the world to come* (see preceding verse). This is a Hebrew mode of expressing great duration and length of time. The words are literally "neither in this age nor in the age succeed-

The fruit according to the tree.

33. Either make the tree good, and his [*its*] fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his [*its*] fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his [*its*] fruit.[e]

34. O generation [*offspring*] of vipers,[f] how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance [*overflow*] of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth [*throweth out*] good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth [*throweth out*] evil things.

e Matthew vii, 17, 18. Luke vi, 43, 44.
f Matthew iii, 7; xxiii, 33.

The Scribes ask a sign.

36. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

38. ¶ Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.[g]

39. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

g Matthew xvi, 1—4. Mark viii, 11—13. Luke xi, 29, 30.

ing." It is long indeed ere the stains of such a sin—arising from a heart alienated and separated from God—can be washed out. By the phrases "this world, and "the world to come," the English reader usually understands "the present life" and "the future;" the whole, that is, of each. There is no indication of any such meaning being attached to the words "present" and "coming age," by the writers of the New Testament. They meant by them "the present stage of our being," and the "following or next stage," beyond the grave. There is no evidence to contradict, but, on the contrary, much to substantiate, the belief that our whole being consists of many stages or periods: that of the present life is one, that immediately succeeding death, another: what or how many more, and in what long-enduring series and progression, may await us after that, it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. If, therefore, our Lord's words in this verse be pressed to the full extent of their literal meaning, they would convey the assertion, that the hard and alienated nature of that mind which could wilfully and wickedly attribute works of mercy and of love to the Spirit of Evil, and thus, in fact, blaspheme the Almighty and call him wicked, could not be restored to a state of harmony with the Divine Spirit, either in the present stage of our existence, or in that which succeeds. The restoration of that soul to God is awfully and indefinitely removed.

33. *Either make the tree good, &c.* Be consistent. Either say that my spirit and my works are good and come from the Good, or say that they are evil, and come from the Evil. Say not that they are good and come from evil, any more than you would say that they were evil, and therefore came from the good.

34. *How can ye, being evil, speak good things?* Our Lord now turns round upon these bad men, and in his righteous indignation applies the same rule to them and their deeds and words as he had desired them to apply to his own. How can we expect, he says, since good works do not proceed from Satan, that good words should be spoken by you? Good men have good feelings and do good things, and bad men bad.

36. *Every idle word, &c.* Our Lord here repeats his condemnation of the language they had used in reference to his works of healing. Even if any of them spoke, not out of deliberate malice and impiety, but out of thoughtlessness and recklessness, yet even words so idly (vainly or unprofitably) spoken should be condemned at the day of judgment.

37. *For by thy words.* Not *only*, but *also*. For their *words* likewise (as well, that is, as their deeds) men shall receive condemnation or approval.

38. *We would see a sign from thee.* Luke (xi, 16) adds, that they sought a sign, probably meaning some visible appearance, from *heaven;* not as this cure, from earth, or as they hinted, from hell, and that they asked this to tempt or try him.

39. *An evil and adulterous generation.* In the human language employed to the Jews to describe divine relations, God was sometimes spoken of as the Spouse or Husband of his people. Jesus describes the existing generation as *faithless* to God: and this term "*faithless* or "*idolatrous*" may be regarded as a sufficiently correct synonym or substitute for the one used in the text.

Nineveh's rebuke of this generation.

40. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41. The men of Nineveh shall rise in [*the*] judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.[h]

42. The queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

h Luke xi, 31, 32.

The unclean spirit.

43. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he [*it*] walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.[i]

44. Then he [*it*] saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he [*it*] is come, he [*it*] findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished.

45. Then goeth he [*it*], and taketh with himself [*itself*] seven other spirits more wicked than himself [*itself*], and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto [*with*] this wicked generation.

46. ¶ While he yet talked to the

i Luke xi, 23—26.

40. *Three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* Obviously an allusion to the time during which our Lord was held captive of death and lay in the grave, which was (to speak exactly) two nights, one whole day, and part of two days. The resemblance between the story of Jonah and the burial and restoration of our Lord to life was, however, sufficiently exact for the purpose of an illustration.

41. *For they repented at the preaching of Jonas.* Read the third chapter of Jonah.

42. *The Queen of the South.* She is introduced to us in I Kings x, as the Queen of Sheba, a district of Arabia Felix, which was, therefore, *south* of Judæa: though Josephus, in his account of this visit, says she was Queen of Egypt and Æthiopia.

43. *When the unclean spirit, &c.* It is difficult to be sure that one has ascertained the exact meaning of our Lord in this singular illustration. The general and obvious admonition contained in it, is to avoid an unemployed state of the faculties, a vacant condition of the mind, as full of danger to our moral welfare. This is most strikingly and awfully explained by shewing the process by which a person is induced to seek again the evil habits and feelings which he had at one time given up. By some healing and happy influence the unclean spirit of his sin is driven out of him. In the indomitable activity of the human nature he goes forth seeking occupation and interest. Finding none that can at once engage his attention and desire, so as to supply the place of what he has sent away from him, he recoils upon his own thoughts and feelings. He finds the chamber of his mind empty, vacant of everything to enlist his interest. It is, however, in longing desire of some occupants; it cannot continue in the vacant condition in which it is at present; it is evidently ready swept and garnished for other guests. The evil spirit of the old sin or the old habit goes out, in horror of the solitude, and stillness, and vacancy, and brings in for company and occupation's sake, a train of additional evil feelings and tendencies, so as to make the state of the man, who, disgusted and annoyed with his effort to reform himself, relapses into the accustomed sin, worse than before the effort was made. Here is a powerful admonition to every one to keep the mind full of active thought and employment, to keep it full of holy and happy occupants, that none of a different kind may find or seek admission into it, and especially when, by a strong effort, a man has got rid of an evil habit, to be sure and take up some other and better interest to supply its place. The metaphorical side of the parable seems to mean simply that the evil spirit goes out of a man, leaving him to find what rest he can; that he goes about this object quietly and soberly, but unsuccessfully; that the evil spirit finds him in this vacant condition, returns to take possession of his mind as before, and now introduces unresistingly a train of other evil spirits, worse than himself.

45. *Even so shall it be also unto* [*with*] *this wicked generation.* Perhaps, even to this generation, having partially listened to the

Who are Christ's brethren.

people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.[k]

47. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49. And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.[l]

k Mark iii, 31—35. Luke viii, 19—21.
l John xv, 14.

The sower on various soils.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

2. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat;[a] and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;[b]

4. And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

a Luke v, 3.
b Mark iv, 1—20. Luke viii, 4—15.

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preaching of John, but not having followed up the preparation made by that ministry, shall now fall into a worse spiritual state than before they heard John, and accumulate upon themselves the iniquity of rejecting and crucifying the Messiah.

47. *Brethren.* Near relations; perhaps literally his brethren, the sons of Joseph and Mary; perhaps his first cousins, the sons of Cleopas—James, Simon and Jude. These near connections, however, whoever they were, including among them his mother, being moved with anxiety for his safety, and even fearing, according to Mark iii, 21, that he was scarcely conscious of the risk he was running, and that "he was beside himself," came to draw him away. But in the calmness of his majestic equanimity, he proclaims himself to be the universal Saviour, to have as relations all those who do the will of his Father in heaven, and to be regardless of any fate that may await himself in obeying that will.

CHAPTER XIII.

2. *Went into a ship and sat.* Got into the boat. The original employs the definite article, as though it were the boat usually employed by our Lord, and owned perhaps by Peter or one of the other disciples. He got into the boat to avoid the pressure of the crowd, and he *sat*, according to the custom of the Jewish Teachers, indeed of *Professors* customarily among ourselves still. In such cases the students appear to have *sat* also, as among us, for St. Paul speaks of his having sat at the feet of Gamaliel.

3. *In parables.* A parable, or *parabole*, is literally a thing *thrown by the side* of another: it is a *comparison*, therefore, or *likeness* of two things. A parable has, in consequence, two meanings running side by side, the one expressed and the other understood. Thus, in the parable of the prodigal son, in the pardoning father is implied as the counterpart the pardoning God; in the prodigal son, the erring creature man; in the elder son, the unfalling but unmerciful and jealous fellow-creature. The design of this peculiar mode of address was, that the one side of the parable might be understood at once and carried in the memory, and the other side, though not seen immediately, gradually worked out by private or subsequent thought, as the more important of the two. Immediate danger from hostile parties was thus avoided, and all angry interruption from such persons as were actually, though not always and at the moment, perceptibly attacked. It was a very suggestive mode of address, under very simple language challenging thought to profound and important truths. It piqued the curiosity, and exercised the ingenuity and reflection, of the hearer. It seems to have been a mode of address, if not peculiar to our Lord, yet pre-eminently favoured by him. In the Old Testament but few instances of it occur. That of the trees, Judges ix, 8—15, and that of the poor man's lamb in II Sam. xii, 1—7, are the chief examples. In the New Testament there are many. The man who built his house upon a rock, and he who built it on the sands. The sower (in this chap.) The

The sower on various soils.

6. And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

8. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.

9. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

d Mark iv, 11.

Why Christ speaks in parables.

10. And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11. He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.[d]

12. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.[e]

e Matthew xxv, 29. Mark iv, 25. Luke viii, 18; and xix, 26.

debtor. The labourers in the vineyard. The wicked husbandmen. The ten virgins. The faithful servant. The good Samaritan. The lost sheep. The unjust steward. Dives and Lazarus. The talents. The publican and the pharisee; and others.

4. *Some seeds fell, &c.* In scattering the seeds from his hand the sower would inadvertently let some fall on the beaten path (or passage through the field) over which the plough did not pass. These would either be "trodden down," as Luke says, or picked up by the birds.

5. *Stony places, &c.* There was a good deal of rocky land in Palestine. If the seed fell on any such which had not yet gathered a sufficient accretion of soil to render it fertile, the seed might spring up very soon through the shallow surface in the comparatively cool time of the year, but when the hot weather returned in the spring [*when the sun was up*] the roots would not be found to be sufficiently protected by the soil, would be immediately reached by the heat, and scorched up.

8. *Brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, &c.* Palestine is now in a neglected condition, but when the energetic stock of Abraham were in possession of it, it reached a high degree of fertility and culture, of which we have confirmation in the numerous instances met with in the Old Testament, of the delight which its inhabitants took in it, as in a land that flowed with milk and honey, and in the many remains of terraces and cisterns, of towns and villages which now attest that a large population and a great productiveness belonged even to the rocky soil of the hilly country north and south of Jerusalem. The expression *hundred fold, sixty fold,* are, of course, not to be taken to the letter.

11. *Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, &c.* I speak, says our Lord, in parables to the multitude, because they are not fitted either by character, inclination, or knowledge, to hear and apprehend the truths which I come to teach, plainly stated; to you, however, this mode is unnecessary. He could speak plainly and clearly to his disciples of the mysteries of the kingdom; that is to say, of the facts and truths which had been hitherto *mysteries* or hidden things, but which he was now come to reveal. But even some of the things afterwards so plainly understood by the Apostles and immediate disciples were at present *mysteries* to them, such as the humiliation and death of Messiah, the restoration to life, the completion of the Jewish dispensation, the entirely spiritual nature of the dispensation that was to succeed, the universality and comprehensiveness of Christianity, including all nations.

12. *Whosoever hath, &c.* The disciples having already many privileges, and using them, should have more; the multitude having few, and neglecting them, should have fewer. This, says our Lord, is a general rule. Industry and its effects grow, and so do negligence and its effects. To him who makes diligent use of his opportunities, either of knowledge, of moral improvement, or even of earthly good, they will be multiplied; whereas from him who neglects to use them, the very opportunities diminish in frequency, and at length fall away altogether. Thoughtless people often observe this and complain of it. They say, all the good luck goes to others, all the ill-luck comes to themselves. There are some people who are always preparing themselves by their earnestness, conscientiousness and perseverance for good; and other persons who are always preparing themselves by their negligence, self-indulgence or dishonesty, for ill. To the former already having, more is given, and they have abundantly; to the

Illustration from Isaiah.

13. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.[f]

16. But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.[g]

17. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them;* and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them.*

The sowing explained.

18. ¶ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for awhile: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth

[f] John xii, 40.

[g] Matthew xvi, 17. Luke x, 23, 24.

latter, having little, that little becomes continually less. This is a law of God, which should strike every one with awe, and make him fear to throw away the opportunities of life.

13. *Therefore speak I to them in parables.* This and the two following verses must be taken together; and the meaning of them would appear to be, that the people were dull and unspiritual, had no longing for, and no appreciation even of, the divine truths he came to teach; that the words used (Isai. vi, 9, 10) to describe their forefathers in the time of King Uzziah, were applicable to them; that they were gross and material, their eyes heavy, and their ears dull; that, therefore, he had to speak to them in parables, to attract their flagging attention, and give them what they were alone capable of receiving, and what might afterwards produce fruit in them.—*Lest at any time, &c.* means—for if it were not so, if they were not dull and heavy, if I had not to speak to them parables, if they could hear and understand the great spiritual truths of my kingdom, they would turn to me, bring their spiritual infirmities to my touch, and I should heal them. The true interpretation of the passage can only be found in regarding the words as adopted from Isaiah, and applied to the people of the time in the irony of grief. The common idea that Jesus means to say that he adopts parables in order that the people may gain no good from his instructions, and lest, if he employed other and better means, they should understand him, and be converted, is mere nonsense.

18. *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.* Christ is the sower, his word is the seed, and the heart of man the soil. The sower and the seed are unchanging quantities, the soil varies. Wayside hearers are those on whom opportunities and exhortations of improvement are thrown incidentally, without anxious search and desire on their part; the word never takes root in them; it is lost directly by mere hard indifference. Stony, or thin-soiled hearers, are those who take up plans of improvement or exhortations to good very readily, but who cannot persevere with them through the hot seasons of trial and temptation: the word that has taken root, soon withers with them. Thorny-soiled hearers are those who take the word addressed to them into hearts already occupied with sins, or passions, or worldly cares—those deceitful desires of wealth which lead a man to believe that it is in itself peace and bliss: the word that had taken root is soon overgrown and choked by these brambles. The seed, though good, and sown by a good sower, can only flourish on good soil. Every thing, then, depends on the preparation of this. The harvest depends upon ourselves, for God has

the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.[h]

23. But he that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it;* which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.

24. ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:[i]

25. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence, then, hath it tares?

28. He said unto them, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou, then, that we go and gather them up?

29. But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

31. ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:[k]

32. Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

h Mark x, 23. *i* Mark iv, 26—32. *k* Luke xiii, 18, 19.

already provided the seasons, and the sower, and the seed. We must prepare the soil.

25. *Tares.* Properly a species of worthless plant growing in Palestine, and greatly resembling wheat in appearance.

30. *Let both grow together until the harvest.* Perhaps because these servants could not very perfectly distinguish them, since they appear to have been so like each other, and might have pulled up the wheat sometimes and left the *zizanium,* here called tare. When more fully grown, at the time of harvest, they might be more easily distinguished. Had there been no such difficulty, it would be hard to reconcile the prohibition of picking out the weeds with good husbandry. It appears that still, in parts of Syria, there is a plant bearing poisonous grain, which grows very abundantly among the wheat, and which is not separated from it until harvest, and then the plants are separated as they are taken from the soil, or else they are left till they are threshed, when the seed is separated by means of a sieve. The good and the bad in this world, to the fallible eye of man, often greatly resemble each other, so as to be sometimes mistaken—the good regarded as bad, and perhaps oftener still, the bad regarded as good. The only certain separation must be made by God himself at that great harvest, when the secret qualities of all natures shall be entirely known. In the meantime, in addition to the fact that no human hand could be trusted with such a work in this world, there is the further consideration, that we are so linked and joined together that the rooting up of the unworthy would often be the loosening of the soil in which they lived from the roots of the worthy. Our business is to beware how we are among the rejected at that great day, as the worthless or even poisonous plants.

32. *So that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.* Naturalists do not know of any mustard tree so large as these words, in their full force, would denote. It is better, therefore, to adhere to the description of St. Mark, who speaks of it as so large that "the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it" (Mark iv, 32), a description not exceeding the known reality. The religion that came forth from the little northern town of Nazareth, and from the bosom of one who was in outward guise the son of a carpenter, may well be compared to a small seed; and its subsequent career and present (and still more, we may hope, its future) condition, may be as aptly compared

33. ¶ Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.[l]

34. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:[m]

35. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

36. Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38. The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one;*

39. The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels [*messengers*], and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

44. ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he

l Luke xiii, 20, 21.

m Mark iv, 33, 34.

to the same seed when grown into a spreading herb.

35. *By the prophet.* The prophet here meant is the writer of the 78th Psalm, who says, v. 2, "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old." The words are not quoted as the fulfilment of a prophecy—which, no one who refers to the Psalm from which they are taken can suppose them to be—but, according to the frequent and natural custom of the New Testament, and especially of St. Matthew, in illustration, from their own national and sacred literature, of the interesting events then passing around them.

37. See note on v. 30.

42. *A furnace of fire.* These words, metaphorically descriptive of the state of sorrow and consuming despair in which wickedness, sooner or later, places its subject, literally refer to the fate of the tares, which, in climates where there is no great abundance of fuel, would be made into bundles and used as faggots for heating ovens and furnaces. The use of such an expression in such a connection, no more implies that the wicked will be thrown into a material furnace of material fire, than the use of the words "gather the wheat into my barn" and "shine forth as the sun," implies that the righteous will be gathered into a granary, or emit rays of light from their forms equal to those of the sun. A little common sense and reasonableness are very useful accompaniments of a study of the Scriptures.

44. *A treasure hid in a field.* In countries where there are no banks or safe places for the deposit of money, or any of those various modes of employing and lending it customary among western nations, it has always been a frequent custom of persons going on a journey, or finding themselves in danger of being plundered, to deposit their money or jewels with a friend, or bury it in a secret place—the wall or foundations of a house, or a secluded spot of land. This has given an impression, not without foundation, to this day among orientals, that much treasure is hidden, especially in the ruins of cities and temples; for it would often happen after flights, or deaths in sieges, or other similar circumstances, that the person never returned for his hidden wealth, or had the opportunity or inclination to reveal its place of deposit to any one else. This makes the Arabs and other orientals so suspicious when Europeans are examining and digging up ruins: they suppose it to be not from the love of art or

The kingdom of heaven like a found treasure.

hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45. ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

46. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

47. ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

48. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

50. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Wonder of the people at Christ.

51. Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

53. ¶ And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

54. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works?[n]

55. Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56. And his sisters, are they not

[n] Mark vi, 2—5. John vi, 42.

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antiquity, but from the hope of meeting with some buried treasure; and they do not like to have any rivals, especially foreigners, in such discoveries.—*Buyeth the field*, for, with the Jews as with us, the treasure was regarded as belonging to him in whose land it was found.

45. *Goodly pearls.* The travelling jeweller is still a frequent personage in the east. His business is to buy, to sell, and to exchange precious stones. Here he is supposed to find one worth all his stock, and more—all that he has. He parts with what he has, in hope of a larger gain than it would bring him; he sells all he has, and buys it. These parables are designed to shew the preciousness—the pricelessness of Gospel privileges, of christian faith and hope—to the sincere believer. He will prefer them to every other possession which he has.

48. *Cast the bad away.* An apt image, for he was addressing fishermen. The Jewish law pronounced all fish that were without fins and scales to be unclean. The Jewish fisherman might thus have to throw more away than others: see Levit. xi, 10.

51. *Have ye understood all these things.* The mere hearing of the ear does not satisfy Jesus. He is desirous of knowing whether his disciples *understand* what they hear. Without this, words are only breath—they have no ideas corresponding to them.

52. *Every scribe.* Originally, every writer or interpreter of the Jewish law, but here applied to the apostle and preacher of Christianity. As the hospitable householder has a store of things on which he can draw, some reserved from former years, and some newly procured; so the teacher of religion should aim at variety in his instructions, not neglecting old truths, and yet availing himself also of new. It would appear that there was something new and striking in this mode of addressing his disciples on the part of Jesus.

54. *His own country.* Nazareth.

55. *The carpenter's son.* Mark (vi, 3), says, "the carpenter," implying that our blessed Lord also worked at that trade; and, as he dwelt with his parents, and "was subject to them" (see Luke ii, 51), before his ministry commenced, nothing is more probable. How miserable and false, then, is the pride of the world, here awfully rebuked! For, if our Lord laboured with his hands, and his Apostles were fishermen, what follower of his can consistently look on honest toil with any other feeling than that of respect? St. Paul supported himself, in portions of his ministry, by making tents; and

Herod hears of Jesus.

all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

57. And they were offended [*they found a stumbling-block, or were scandalized*] in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.[o]

58. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

CHAPTER XIV.

AT that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

2. And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.[a]

His alarm.

3. ¶ For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

4. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

5. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.[b]

6. But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

o John vi, 40.

a Mark vi, 14—29. Luke iii, 19, 20; ix, 7—9.
b Matthew xxi, 26. Luke xx, 6.

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it was customary among the learned men, or rabbis, of the Jews, to combine with their learned education instruction in some useful handicraft.

55, 56. *His brethren—his sisters.* Probably his cousins: see Matth. x, 2.

58. *Because of their unbelief.* On the principle of not throwing pearls before swine. In his short ministry, Jesus desired to labour nowhere in vain. If not received in one place, he passed on to another, and he wished his Apostles to adopt the same course.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. *Herod the Tetrarch,* son of Herod the Great, and bearing the name of Antipas, in addition to that of Herod. He was ruler of Galilee, or Tetrarch (a word literally and in its first sense meaning a governor of a *fourth* part.) He is called by Mark in the corresponding passage (vi, 14), *King* Herod. He appears now first to have *heard of the fame of Jesus*—an ignorance not to be wondered at, if we consider the slowness with which at all times news of the events which are occurring, or the thoughts that are circulating, in the humbler walks of life, ascend to the ears of the great, but especially when, as in the time of our Lord, intelligence travelled so slowly from one part of the country to another.

2. *This is John the Baptist.* The corresponding account in Mark (which compare with the present, Mark vi, 14, &c.) is much more striking. Herod had never been easy under the death of John; his conscience was oppressed with the guilt of the act. As soon as he hears of Jesus, his fears excite him to say that it was John the Baptist, and that the heavenly powers were taking up his cause. When others said it was Elias, or some other of the old prophets (for many of the Jews believed in the transmigration of souls, or the passage of the same soul from body to body in successive generations), he repeats his alarmed conviction—"It is John, I say, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead."

3. *In prison.* In the fortress of Machærus, in Perea.—*His brother Philip's wife.* Not the *brother Philip* of whom Luke speaks (iii, 1) as being Tetrarch of Ituræa, but another brother Philip, a half-brother, son of Herod the Great by his wife Mariamne, and to whom Herod finally resolved to leave no portion of his kingdom.

4. *It is not lawful for thee to have her.* For, in the first place Herod himself was already married to a daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, and in the second place, his brother Philip was still living.

6. *Herod's birth day.* The Egyptian monarch Pharoah celebrated his birth-day (Gen. xl, 20) and the Persians had a similar custom: but it does not seem to have prevailed among the Jews. We hear in the New Testament of many feasts; but they are in celebration of marriages, the return of absent members of the family, or other similar events of interest. The Herods were half-gentiles, and did not confine themselves to the usages of the nation over which they ruled.

The daughter of Herodias, Salome, who was not, probably, as most persons suppose from the expressions "daughter" and "damsel," a young woman, but a little girl of very tender age, who was but recently born when Herodias left her husband Philip. No young woman of modesty and of respectable rank

Herodias' daughter dances before him.

7. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

8. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger [*a large dish*].

9. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

10. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

Asks for John's head in a charger.

11. And his head was brought in a charger [*a large dish*], and given to the damsel [*the little girl*]: and she brought *it* to her mother.

12. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

13. ¶ When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.[c]

14. And Jesus went forth, and saw

c Mark vi, 31—44. Luke ix, 10—17. John vi, 2—14.

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would have danced thus publicly in an eastern court.

7. *Promised, &c.* This silly practice was very common with the Eastern monarchs on great festive occasions. They would promise sometimes in their drunken glee any thing "to the half of their kingdom." It would be usually understood that the favours asked should not be unduly extravagant or displeasing to the monarch. But sometimes they were taken advantage of, and when their royal word was thus pledged in reckless confidence, a request such as that made here by Salome for the life of John, or in Esther (vii, 6) for that of Haman, would be preferred to the surprise, and sometimes, as in the present case, to the indignation and grief of the monarch, of whom, therefore, it was very dangerous and very rare thus to take advantage.

8. *Being instructed of her mother.* No doubt, Herod expected a child's request—the gift of some gay and beautiful thing upon the table. What must have been, therefore, his horror, when this young creature came to him with this brutal and wicked petition.

10. *And he sent and beheaded John in the prison.* There are three ways of understanding the general circumstances of this narrative. First, we may suppose, that the whole was the affair of a few hours; that Herod was at the time in the very castle of Machærus, where John was confined, or in some neighbouring residence; that Salome asked for the head in a dish, from seeing the things upon the table before her—that is, asked for the dish, and instead of fruits or confections, or ornaments in it, begged, at her mother's desire, for it to be filled with the head of John the Baptist, and that the murder, the gift, and the promise were all at once fulfilled. Or, secondly, we may suppose the King to be as usual in the royal palace at Tiberias, and to have despatched from thence to Machærus orders for the execution of John, in which case the transactions recorded in the text must have occupied a couple of days, and the "charger" may have had no allusion to the feast, but have been mentioned as a not uncommon mode of shewing to him who had issued the commands that they had been really executed. Or, lastly, we may suppose the whole account to be given in the dramatic spirit of oriental narrative, which always represents things in *action*, when they appear to occupy scarcely more time in being done than they do in being described. The tone of St. Mark's account seems to support the first or the last of these views, Mark vi, 25—27.

13. *When Jesus heard of it.* Namely, that Herod Antipas had heard of him, and wanted to see him, see verse 1. The account of John the Baptist is a digression, and intended to shew both why Herod was afraid of Jesus, and why Jesus thought it better to avoid him.—*He departed thence*, for if Herod had seized upon him, his fate might have been the same as the Baptist's. But Jesus was not to be murdered in a dungeon, but to be lifted up, "that he might draw all men unto him." He removed, not from fear, but because his mission was not yet accomplished, or the destined time and manner of his death arrived.—*A desert place apart.* A retired place, Luke (ix, 10) says "belonging to the city called Bethsaida," (afterwards called *Julias*), and John says (vi, 1) "over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias." It was, therefore, probably near that Bethsaida (of which name there were two places) which was situated on the north-eastern extremity of the lake, away from the dominions of Herod Antipas, and in those of Philip, in lower Gaulomitis.—*On foot.* By land, round the lake. The people were too numerous and the boats too few to go by water.

a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

15. ¶ And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

17. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves and two fishes.

18. He said, Bring them hither to me.

19. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

20. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

21. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

22. ¶ And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when

17. *We have here, &c.* According to John (vi, 9), in the hands of a lad in the company.

19. *On the grass.* Shewing the sense in which the words "desert place" are used in the Gospel,—retired places, not much cultivated, but where cattle might graze.—*He blessed.* It was the beautiful and devout custom of the Jews to ask the Almighty giver of good to bless the provisions of his bounty before they partook of them. The usual form before meat was thus simple and solemn: "Blessed art Thou, our God, King of the Universe, who bringest bread out of the earth!" and after meat, "Blessed be our God, the King of the Universe, the Creator of the fruit of the vine." This custom should never be allowed in our Christian families to degenerate into a mere observance. The Parent or other person who asks the blessing should always do it with a full consciousness of the nature of the act. It should always be asked in seriousness and in the midst of stillness among all assembled. So implored, the Divine blessing may save many from repining and discontent, and make them indeed sensible of God's mercies. It is a lamentable inconsistency to ask a blessing, and then to sit down and grumble at the dinner. The first should prevent the last.—*Brake.* We do not hear in the Scriptures of *cutting* bread, but *breaking* it, because the Jews cooked their bread in the form of biscuits, not of our loaves.

20. *And they took up of the fragments twelve baskets full.* So that, even in the midst of this wonderful act of bounty, due care was taken to avoid waste or destroying any thing that God had given for human nourishment. This miracle is only an instructive and illustrative form of the marvels which God is continually performing on our behalf, in giving us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness—out of the few small seeds we place in the earth in the spring, bringing forth large abundance in the summer and autumn. The twelve baskets were probably those carried by the Apostles, who each filled his own. If they had done as many thoughtless people do among us in seasons of abundance and prosperity, they would have scorned to preserve these fragments. They who most waste commonly most want.

22. *Unto the other side.* To the western side—towards Capernaum, according to St. John (vi, 17); towards Bethsaida, according to St. Mark (vi, 45): they were both on the same side, though the last was most to the south. The disciples appear to have been unwilling to leave their Master: unless "constrained" simply means "desired" them. It is difficult to account for Jesus and his disciples so soon returning to the dominions of Herod Antipas, from which he fled, according to this account, only in the morning; unless he was forced to retire before a new danger from the multitudes, who, St. John tells us, wanted to make him king.

23. *He went up into a mountain apart to pray.* Our Lord sought ever to renew the sources of his spiritual strength in private prayer.

The storm on the lake.

the evening was come, he was there alone.[d]

24. But the ship [*the boat*] was now in the midst of the sea [*the middle of the lake*], tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit [*it is an apparition*]; and they cried out for fear.

27. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship [*was come down from the boat*], he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

d Mark vi, 45—56; John vi, 15—21.

Christ's appearance and summons to Peter.

31. And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32. And when they were come into the ship [*the boat*] the wind ceased.

33. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him [*prostrated themselves in reverence before him, or did him obeisance*], saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

34. ¶ And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

35. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

36. And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

CHAP. XV.

THEN came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,[a]

a Mark vii, 1—23.

Especially after or before some great work or trial did he seek the Divine support. In this, as in all other respects, is he our best ensample; and we should seek our aid as he sought his, from his Father and our Father, his God and our God.

24. *For the wind was contrary.* When the current of the lake which flowed from north to south was opposed by a wind blowing from south to north, a violent storm was created; and to such alarming hurricanes the sea of Galilee was subject.

25. *In the fourth watch.* This was according to the Roman division of the night into four watches of three hours each, instead of into three watches of four hours each, which appears to have been the division of the ancient Jews. The night was calculated from six to six. The fourth watch, therefore, was from three to six in the morning.

28. *Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.* The learned Wesleyan, Dr. Adam Clarke, says on this verse, "A weak faith is always wishing for signs and miracles. *To take Christ at his word*, argues not only the perfection of faith, but also the highest exercise of sound reason. He is to be credited on his *own word*, because he is the TRUTH."

30. *He was afraid, and beginning to sink, &c.* This narrative is a lesson, a warning, and an encouragement to all on their passage through the waters of life. Apparent evils and dangers approach us, and we cry out from fear; but perhaps a heavenly voice whispers in our ears, "be not afraid—it is I." When thus encouraged, we go forth to meet the trial that awaits us: the wind, it may be, is boisterous, and bears us down, and we begin to sink. In our agony we call out to our Divine Helper, and he stretches forth his hand to bear us up, and at length we are safe in the ark of that God in whom, by whose assistance, we had trusted. It has been well said of Peter "Whilst he believed the sea was brass: when he began to distrust, those waves were water."

34. *Gennesaret.* The same which is called, in the Old Testament, Chinnereth.

36. *Touch the hem of his garment.* In this respect following the example of the sick woman, of whose successful application to Jesus they had very probably heard. Matt. ix, 20.

Washings before meat.

2. Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

3. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God, by your tradition?

The law broken by traditions.

4. For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and He that curseth [*revileth*] father or mother, let him die the death.

5. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is* a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

CHAPTER XV.

1. *Which were of Jerusalem.* It is particularly noticed that the Scribes and Pharisees were of Jerusalem, because in a remote part of the country their appearance would excite much observation, and their questions be regarded as stamped by peculiar talent and penetration. "From London" has still a commanding sound with it in many parts of our own country.

2. *The tradition of the elders.* Besides their acknowledged sacred books, the professors of almost all religions have a number of interpretations and additions, which are too apt to become, in time, possessed of an authority equal to, or even greater than, the original law and doctrine professed. Thus, to the Koran, the Moslems add a large mass of commentary: to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the Roman Catholics add a large, and most Protestants a smaller, amount of laws and doctrines of their own: and so the Jews added in the same way to the Old Testament a great quantity of laws, doctrines, and explanations, which too often they regarded as more obligatory and sacred than the provisions of the Old Testament itself. These were after the time of our Lord collected into the Talmuds, one of which was called the Jerusalem Talmud, and is usually dated about A.D. 200; and the other, the Babylonian Talmud, about A.D. 500. The Talmud consisted of two parts: the Mishna or text (subject matter) of the Traditions, and the Gemera, or commentary upon that text. The traditions, the Jews contended, were an oral revelation given to Moses, which was afterwards committed to writing (and formed the Mishna), and to this and all its minute provisions, by the time of our Lord, they had begun to pay more attention than to the much simpler and truer, the much wiser and more venerable, law of Moses. One of these provisions was, that the hands should be washed before meals—a very excellent and praiseworthy custom, contributing greatly to health and cleanliness in itself; but absurd when inculcated as a binding religious observance, which it was a sin against God to omit. It was even declared that an evil spirit sat on the food of him who ate without washing his hands, and made it unwholesome to him, and that the omission was as bad as a moral uncleanness.

3. *Why do ye also transgress, &c.* Our Lord does not reject or disapprove the custom, which had the sanction of great antiquity and sanatory value; but he shews the objectors that it was a far worse thing to make obedience to the tradition an occasion for violating the divine command, than it was to omit obedience to a useful but not religiously binding tradition. It was surely a less evil, he says, to leave the hands unwashed at meal-times, and to pay due attention to the wants of our parents, than to neglect our parents but wash our hands.

4. *Die the death.* See the dreadfully severe laws in Exod. xxi, 17, and Deut. xxi, 18—21. In a pastoral and agricultural state of society, with a scattered population, it was necessary to invest the parent with something of absolute authority, to preserve peace and obedience in his family. In our own land and time there is a lamentable deficiency of the reverence due to parents. Young people sometimes even go so far as to forsake their homes, or make homes for themselves, as soon as they are independent, and leave their parents to penury and want. Such a return for the care and kindness that have been exercised towards them cannot be followed by any blessing to themselves.

5. *It is a gift, &c.,* or an offering. If a selfish child chose to make a rash vow, and dedicate or pretend to dedicate to the service of the temple the means by which he could have assisted his parents in their necessities, the tradition said that he was exempt from the duty. Thus the traditions, which the scribes from Jerusalem were so anxious should be obeyed, in the matter of washing the hands, allowed things most opposed to the laws of nature and of God in the matter of honouring parents. Though it is right to give to purposes of religion, it is never right to give what our own parents or near relatives may be unable to obtain and yet may deserve

Hypocrisy.

6. And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free.* Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

7. *Ye* hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

9. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

10. ¶ And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

11. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

13. But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

That which defileth a man.

14. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind: and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.[b]

15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

16. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?

17. Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

18. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

20. These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

21. ¶ Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts [*region*] of Tyre and Sidon.

22. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts [*borders*], and cried unto him, saying,

[b] Luke vi, 39.

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for the supply of their necessities. In such cases God would be better pleased by mercy than by sacrifice.

13. *Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted.* We often trace in the disciples, while Jesus was with them, much of that fear and alarm which was natural to men of their humble rank and power when they thought that their superiors were offended. In the early days of their companionship with Jesus they seem to expect that he will share in their timidity, and be anxious to avoid giving offence to, or encountering danger from, the Scribes or Pharisees. It was only by slow degrees that they came to understand that the man in humble guise before them had no fear but of God; and that it was his express design and mission to root up every plant which his heavenly Father had not planted—to destroy all those mistakes about human duty and religious service which God did not approve. After the death and reappearance of Jesus, and their investiture with the full office of apostles, they forgot their humble worldly rank, and had courage to obey God rather than man, even to the sacrifice of their lives.

14. *Ditch.* Probably the pit or well dug for the reception of water.

21. *Into the coasts* [*region*] *of Tyre and Sidon.* These two cities were within a few miles of each other, and are therefore put together. Jesus appears to have gone in the direction of them, but not to them. It does not appear that he ever went beyond the limits of the Holy Land. His message was to the lost sheep of Israel: he forbids his disciples to go in the first place to any others. His first desire is for the good of the seed of Abraham. On the same principle he at first declines attending to the request of the Canaanite woman.

22. *A woman of Canaan.* Mark (vii, 26) calls her, generally, "a Greek," and more particularly, "a Syrophœnician by nation." "Greek" is often employed in the New Testament in the general sense of "gentile" or "foreigner." In the case before us it is

The Syrophœnician woman.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil [*dæmon*].[c]

23. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.[d]

25. Then came she and worshipped him [*did him obeisance*], saying, Lord help me.

26. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* to dogs.

27. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

29. And Jesus departed from

c Mark vii, 24—30. d Matthew x, 5, 6.

Christ's compassion on the multitude.

thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.[e]

30. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them:

31. Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

32. ¶ Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.[f]

33. And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness as to fill so great a multitude?

e Mark vii, 31—37. f Mark viii, 1—9.

specified what kind of foreigner the woman was. She was of that country to which Jesus was now approaching, and in which Tyre and Sidon were situated—Phœnicia—which was anciently, with the rest of the country to the south, called Canaan. But, as there were other Phœnicians settled in Africa, she is pointed out as belonging to old Phœnicia, which was part of *Syria*. She was, therefore, a Greek, or gentile, or foreigner, and a Syrophœnician.

26. *It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.* The account of this incident in our Lord's life should be read in St. Mark, where many lesser circumstances are mentioned which help us to a clearer and juster view of the nature of our Lord's treatment of this poor woman. In the first place, we learn from it that Jesus went into that part of the country for the sake of retirement, and with a desire to attract no public notice. "He could not," however, "be hid." This poor woman finds him out, and, if he attended to her at once, he would be surrounded by similar applicants; he, therefore, makes no reply to her appeal. At length the disciples interfering, he plainly indicates to the woman that his instructions and his works of mercy are designed for his own countrymen. He pictures a family-group at their meal; the children at the table, and the dogs (no hated animals, but favourites and friends) lying at their feet. He says, "the children must first be filled;" you would not give their meat to the dogs. The woman, with admirable aptness, replies, that the dogs might at least receive the crumbs that fell from the family table. This answer, shewing so much sense, meekness, and faith, quite subdues Jesus, and he yields to her entreaties. The whole is a very tender and beautiful scene, and probably was not characterized, as it really took place, by any of that harshness which appears on the face of St. Matthew's account, when taken by itself. The deed of mercy, however, seems to necessitate Jesus' immediate withdrawal, for it destroyed his privacy.

29. *And came nigh unto the sea of Galilee.* In Decapolis, or the region of the Ten Cities, on the eastern banks of the lake.

32. *And have nothing to eat.* And have *now* nothing to eat; have consumed all that they brought with them.

He feeds them again.

34. And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

35. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36. And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

37. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets full.

38. And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children.

39. And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts [*borders or neighbourhood*] of Magdala.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.[a]

2. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather: for the sky is red.

3. And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times?[b]

The signs of the times.

4. A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

5. And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.[c]

6. ¶ Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

7. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread.

8. *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

9. Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

10. Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

a Mark viii, 11—13. *b* Luke xii, 54—57. *c* Mark viii, 14—21.

CHAPTER XVI.

4. *A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.* The Hebrew people were represented as *married* to God, as the *spouse* of the Most High, and therefore as bound to him by a covenant of love and obedience, the most sacred that human beings can know. Hence, when charged with a violation of the fidelity and constancy to be expected in such a state, they were characterized as adulterous. This is the origin of the peculiar expression so often employed in the Scriptures to denote disobedience and idolatry. Generally speaking, idolatrous or rebellious, idolatry or rebellion, may be substituted with sufficient adherence to the meaning of the writer in this connection, for the words "adultery" and "adulterous." The Jewish people of that generation our Lord rebukes for seeking special signs from God of his continued presence among them of their own selection, instead of having their hearts open to those signs which God was spontaneously giving them of his will. They, like other nations, had learnt those phenomena in the heavens which portended special kinds of weather; why did they not learn in the same way to discern those moral signs now abundantly exhibited to them in the circumstances of Christ's ministry and instruction, that God was coming now especially among them?

6. *Beware of the leaven*, i. e., of the spirit which animated the Pharisees and Sadducees in their doctrine and practices, and especially with reference to the demand which they had just made for arbitrary and outward signs of their own choosing, instead of those which God offered to them. The Gospel itself is sometimes compared to "leaven." The metaphor points, therefore, to an *active* power, whether for good or ill.

Pharisaic and Saddusaic leaven.

11. How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

12. Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

13. ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts [*parts or region*] of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom [*who*] do men say that I the Son of man am?[d]

Who is Christ.

14. And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15. He saith unto them, But whom [*who*] say ye that I am?

16. And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar- [*son of*] Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

d Mark viii, 27—33. Luke ix, 18—22.

13. *Cæsarea Philippi,* at the southern extremity of Mount Hermon. Formerly called Paneas, from the grotto of Pan, near which it lay, and still called Banias. Philip, the Tetrarch of Trachonitis, enlarged and beautified it, and called it Cæsarea in honour of the reigning Cæsar—Tiberius; and Philippi (of Philip) in commemoration of himself, its restorer. Herod Agrippa afterwards called it Neronias, out of compliment to Nero. But the old name has outlived both the Cæsars and their flatterers.

14. *Some Elias, and others Jeremias.* The last verses in the Prophecies of Malachi run thus (Mal. iv, 5, 6): "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." On this passage the Jews founded their expectation of the return of Elijah (or Elias) to the earth; shewing thereby the danger of interpreting literally and closely poetic and general phraseology. However, our Lord adopts the application to John, as correct in spirit, and says, "and if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come." The same tendency to believe in the metempsychosis or transmigration of souls from the body of a person deceased to that of some other in a later age led others to imagine that Jeremiah was re-appearing in the person of Jesus Christ.

15. *Thou art the Christ, &c.* Messiah, Christ, and Anointed, are respectively the Hebrew, Greek, and English words for the same meaning. The fervour of Peter gave utterance to what we should think must have been for some time the forming and maturing conviction of the companions of Jesus, that the benign being, whom they were following, was no mere resuscitated spirit, was no forerunner of the better age, but himself the bringer of that better age; the anointed of God to preach glad tidings of great joy unto the world; the dear Son of God, commissioned to convey his spirit to the earth, and to live the life of God in the body and among the circumstances of man. The subsequent weakness shewn by, and rebuke administered to, Peter, as narrated in the concluding part of this chapter, are a sad counterpoise to the joy and glory of this avowal. The most impetuous spirits are not always the most constant, nor those who are first to take up a cause always the last to leave it. The Apostle Peter shewed this by his early avowal but later denial of Jesus; but in his career is beautifully shewn the worth and dignity of a true repentance, for he vindicated the sincerity of his attachment to his Lord by a course of labours and sufferings, all the more eagerly and steadfastly encountered, perhaps, from his momentary disownment. Deeds are the only true and reliable sign of repentance and change. Thus, unkindness to any one should be remedied by some act of kindness—unfaithfulness by increased and never-again lapsing fidelity—negligence and idleness by subsequent continued industry and care.

17. *Flesh and blood, &c.* The ordinary feelings and opinions of the age and people, the dictates of a common sensuous heart, would only have led to the suspicion that Christ "deceived the people," or was, at best, but "a good man," or, at most, but "Elias, or one of the prophets." Peter's declaration, however, was inspired by a deeper conviction, and came from a higher source; it originated in that spirit which lifts a man

The rock of the church.

18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [*rock*], and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell [*hades*] shall not prevail against it.

19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.[e]

20. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Peter's lament and Christ's rebuke.

21. ¶ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.[f]

22. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

23. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan [*adversary*]: thou art an offence [*snare, or stumbling-block*] unto me:

e John xx, 19—23.

f Matthew xx, 17—19.

up into communion with God, and which makes one of God and Christ and all his true disciples. It was the fruitful receiving heart of Peter which was chosen as the seat of the germ of divine knowledge and insight.

18. *Upon this rock, &c.* In a land abounding with loose sandy soil, or subject to heavy falls of rain, and the consequent rush of impetuous and destructive torrents, to build upon a rock was a condition of safety frequently insisted upon. Peter's enthusiasm, energy, and perseverance of character, pointed him out as well fitted to be the leading Apostle of the twelve whom Jesus then addressed, and to be the rock on which the Church of Christ might be safely founded. It does not follow that this is also true of every follower of Christ who in any age may be chosen Bishop of Rome, or wear a tiara. We can see no connection between the two things.

The gates of hell—hades. Hades was the abode of the departed. In the gates of cities were of old time held the courts of judgment. "My help is in the *gates*," meant, therefore, that the judges and chief people were with the speaker, or on his side. The gates of hades, then, meant the powers of death and darkness. These, Christ says, should not prevail against, however they might threaten or molest, his immortal and indestructible church, which should live in light and majesty for ever.

19. *The keys of the kingdom of heaven.* When a man was admitted to be doctor or teacher of the Jewish law, the key of the apartment of the temple in which the sacred books were kept was put into his hands, as a symbol of his freedom and his authority to teach the law. Thus Christ figuratively put, as it were, the key of *his* kingdom, the key of the Gospel, into the hands of his disciple, and created him teacher of his doctrine. It is interesting to observe how early Peter used these keys to unlock the gates of the kingdom, and not, as pretended teachers too often do, to fasten the doors of knowledge and of truth, to prevent those who were entering in from going any further; for he first preached the religion of his Lord both to the Jews and to the Gentiles.

Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, &c. In the rabbinical writings the words "bind" and "loose," are used thousands of times in the sense of "forbid" and "permit." What Peter, then, in his capacity of teacher or doctor of the gospel "forbad" of the old or Mosaic law, should be forbidden, what he "allowed" should be allowed. In the exercise of this authority, he and the other apostles (to whom it was afterwards extended in xviii, 18, when Christ was giving them a fuller constitution) forbad the imposition of circumcision on Gentile believers, and the eating of blood, of things strangled, or offered to idols: and they allowed the baptizing of Gentiles, and their release from the ceremonial law. What the promise has to do with the forgiveness of sins and transgressions in Christians at large and of every country and age by a fellow-christian who is said to be one of the successors of St. Peter at Rome, it is difficult to see.

21. *From that time forth began Jesus, &c.* A greater and fuller confidence now grew up between Christ and his Apostles. They had shewn their faith in him, and he could now put greater trust in them. Sympathy with, and understanding of, the feelings and purposes of those whom we love and venerate induce them to unfold themselves to us with greater confidence and explicitness. Jesus

True loss and gain.

for thou savourest [*regardest*] not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24. ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.[f]

25. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.

26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

27. For the son of man shall [*is about to*] come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

The coming of the Son of Man.

27. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the son of man coming in his kingdom.

CHAPTER XVII.

AND after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,[a]

2. And was transfigured before

[f] Luke ix, 23—27.

[a] Mark ix, 2—32. Luke ix, 28—45.

therefore began now to shew to his apostles the dark things of his future fate, and it was disappointing to him to find this very Peter, who had just exhibited so true an appreciation of his character and mission, now attempt to soothe his Lord by weak assurances and wishes that the trials he was unfolding to them should not happen to him.

24. *Take up his cross, &c.* So far from giving any encouragement to the weak counsels and wishes of Peter, he distinctly tells his Apostles that the same fate which awaits their master, they must look to encounter themselves. Familiar as this fact of the crucifixion of Jesus is to our minds now, it must have been a horrid and appalling idea to those attached and revering ones, who first heard it declared, that their pure and lofty and benignant Master was to be seized and subject to the basest form of a violent death. Peter may almost be excused for his deprecatory horror, though it shewed how far he was yet from understanding the true nature of his Master's kingdom and greatness.

25. *Whosoever will save his life, &c.* In such enigmatic forms are sometimes the most solemn truths conveyed. He who would seek above all things to secure the life of the body, may sometimes sacrifice to it honour, truth and duty, and thus lose the true spiritual life: while he who would endanger his bodily life for these, would thereby be preserving the life of his soul.

26. *For what is a man profited, &c.* The sense given to these words in our version is the second or implied meaning, not the first and direct meaning. The literal meaning is, that life is the one thing needful to all things else: it matters not if a man have pleasure and wealth and the whole world before him, if he at the same time cannot preserve his life. In a similar manner, all other things are worthless compared with the soul: what profits it, if a man gain honour and comfort for this moment of time by the sacrifice of the eternal future?

27. *There be some standing here, &c.* Jesus closes with encouragements. Christ should come in the glory of his proclaimed kingdom, and acknowledged messiahship, and visit his faithful followers with the honour they deserved. And faith should not be faint with waiting for it, for some then present should live to see it. John at least, and probably others of those present, lived to see Scribe and Pharisee subdued, Jerusalem overthrown, and Christ ascending his throne and ruling over the hearts of men, and over the laws and customs of society, and changing the face of the world.

CHAPTER XVII.

1. *After six days.* Luke, as an independent narrator, calculates it at "about an eight days after." The difference is as great or as little, as if some one among us, in giving an account of an event, on the precise time of which nothing of any importance depended, were to say "it was about a week ago;" while a second person thought it was six days, and a third thought it might be eight. These little actual discrepancies in time—so likely to occur in simple and inartificial narrators, who never contemplated a minute examination, as though they were upon their oath in a court of justice, where the precision of their statements, even to an hour, might affect the guilt or innocence, the life or death, of a person on trial—shew, however, equally the folly both of those who insist upon an exact and literal agreement in

Christ Transfigured.

them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias [*Elijah*] talking with him.

4. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles [*tents*]; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6. And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

The coming of Elijah.

7. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

9. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

10. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why, then, say the Scribes that Elias [*Elijah*] must first come?

11. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias [*Elijah*] truly shall first come, and restore all things.

12. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatso-

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all the Evangelists, and of those who attach the greatest importance to the discrepancies which do exist, making mountains out of these molehills, and pretending that they seriously affect the general truthfulness and trustworthiness of the narrators.

Peter, James and John. These three disciples were more than once selected as the companions of Jesus' privacy. Even the Lord had his friends, and loved these more than others. He sought, because he knew that he should receive, their sympathy, in the hours alike of his triumph and his depression. These men, that now saw him in his glory on the mount, were with him in his agony in the garden. A true friend is distinguished from a common acquaintance by nothing more than this, by his delighting in our praise and honour, and feeling for us in our cloud and darkness. It is affecting to think of our Lord in the midst of that lone majesty of soul, in which he must have stood among his followers on earth, stepping forth in the tender and human beauty of his character to seek not witnesses only, but companions, in the hour of the vision, when his face did shine as the sun, and in the hour of the twilight of his soul, when he began to be sorrowful and very heavy, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

4. *Let us make here three tabernacles* [*tents*], or booths, from the surrounding trees. It would be vain for us to conjecture with what object Peter made this proposal, as it evidently arose from a confused state of mind, occasioned by his suddenly becoming alive to some unusual appearance. According to the account in Luke, he had been asleep, he was now afraid, and this confused and agitated condition made him speak wildly and incoherently, "not knowing what he said."

5. *This is my beloved Son, &c.* These words convey the whole of the claims of Christ to our obedience. He is the beloved Son of God, in whom God is well pleased, and whom we are therefore commanded to hear and to obey.

9. *Tell the vision to no man.* The same charge as is given on other occasions, in order to prevent any undue acceleration of the fate of Jesus, and to avoid the risk of any popular commotion in his favour.

10. *Why then say the Scribes, &c.* Unless the original connection of these words has been lost by the omission of something immediately preceding them, we must suppose that they have reference to the vision of the Mount, and are to be thus understood—are the Scribes right in saying that Elijah must precede Messiah? If this be granted, the actual appearance of Elijah must expedite the coming of the kingdom. Now we have seen Elijah: why are we, then, to keep the fact secret, and to keep it secret until the Messiah himself, before whom Elijah must come, has been, and gone, and returned? Jesus corrects the mistaken reference and

ever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man [*in like manner also the Son of man is about to*] suffer of them.

13. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

14. ¶ And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

15. Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse [*unbelieving and perverted*] generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

18. And Jesus rebuked the devil [*dæmon*]; and he [*it*] departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

19. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him [*it*] out?

20. And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.[b]

21. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

22. ¶ And while they abode [*were journeying*] in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, the son of man shall [*is about to*] be betrayed into the hands of men:

23. And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

24. ¶ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received

[b] Matthew xxi, 21.

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points to John the Baptist as the prophet alluded to.

15. *For he is a lunatick.* From the short but vivid description of the Father, this disease would appear to correspond with epilepsy or the falling sickness. The appellation *lunatick* survives from the time when these diseases were attributed to the supposed influence of the *moon* upon them. No one who has ever seen the painting in the Vatican, by Raphael, in which he has put into living colours the principal features of this scene, can ever forget the distorted eyeballs and stiffened form of the poor boy; the eager stare of the father's anxiety while he holds him; the beseeching looks of the mother and her sister, and the group of compassionating but powerless and bewildered disciples, in their various attitudes of study, sympathy, sorrow and reference to the absent Master. Thus may art be made instrumental in deepening the lessons of religion, and help to bring back, in something of their original reality and power, the scenes of the ministry of mercy in Galilee.

20. *Because of your unbelief.* We are seldom disposed to look within ourselves for the causes of our failures. We attribute our trials, our troubles, and our want of success, to things outside ourselves, and to the defects and wrong-doings of other people; whereas many, perhaps most or all of them, may spring from our own want of earnestness, perseverance, religious trust and faith.—*Say unto this mountain, &c.* This was evidently a proverbial expression, employed to describe great and difficult things. Thus the Apostle Paul uses it, "Though I had all faith, so that I could remove mountains."

21. *Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.* Many kinds of spiritual power, of greatness and goodness, can only be reached by the most unremitting spiritual watchfulness. Earnest private prayer to God, and a careful control exercised over the thoughts, appetites and passions, can alone enable us to reach them. They that were to be teachers and examples to the world had special need of these.

24. *They that received tribute-money came to Peter.* The generality of the translation of the terms in this verse and the 27th has deprived it of all specific character and precision. Instead of the general terms "tribute-money," "tribute," and "piece of money," the original gives us the exact na-

The Temple Tribute.

tribute *money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

25. He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him [*anticipated him, or spoke first*], saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

26. Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

How to be procured.

27. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?[a]

a Mark ix, 33—37. Luke ix, 46—48; xxii, 24—30.

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ture and amount of the tax, and the sum obtained to meet it. In the first place, it was not one of the taxes levied by the Roman government, because it is mentioned by a name of its own, the "didrachmon," or "two drachmas," and the collectors of it are not called "publicans" or collectors of the "*public*" revenue, but, the receivers of the "didrachma" or "the two drachmas." This was therefore the tax of half a shekel, equal to "two drachmas" of the Greek, or half a crown of our money, which was levied upon every grown-up male Jew for the support of the Temple and its service. In the next place, in verse 25, when the tribute demanded by kings is spoken of, another word is used, not "*didrachmon*," the specific Jewish tribute to the temple, but "*census*" and "*telos*," general words for general political levies and taxes. In the third place, in verse 27, the "piece of money" is definitely stated in the original as a "*stater*" which is calculated to have been equal to about one shekel, and therefore just enough to pay the two half shekels, demanded from Peter and our Lord himself. Our Lord's argument in these verses is, "We will pay the *didrachmas* or temple-tax, Peter—but strictly speaking we ought to be exempt, for as the kings of the earth only demand tribute from subject nations, and not from their own sons and citizens—and as the priests in the temple are free even from the half-shekel tax, because they are children of the temple—so ought we, who are the sons of God, and citizens of the kingdom of heaven, to be exempt from the religious tax."

27. *Thou shalt find a piece of money.* "A *stater*" or shekel, the precise amount required. Some persons suppose that our Lord meant this literally, and that it was accomplished literally. Others believe that our Lord rather meant that Peter was to have recourse to his usual calling and occupation to enable him to pay the demand made upon them, and that he employed this strong figurative language to convey the certainty with which Peter should find his toil rewarded, and catch the fish, which should be exchanged for the money required. Similar would this, then, be to the well-known language of the dying father, who commended industry and tillage to his surviving children, under the assurance that they should find hidden treasure beneath the soil.—*That take and give unto them for me and thee.* This is an instance of our Lord's forbearance to interfere with the authoritative regulations of his country, where there was no moral wrong involved in rendering obedience to them. It is better at all times perseveringly to struggle for the repeal of any bad law than to disobey it while it is law. Because if every citizen were to be judge in his own case whether existing laws, acquiesced in by the community at large, were to be obeyed by him or not, there could be no social order or safety among us. Nevertheless, if a man's conscience forbids him to do the deed which is required to obey the law, he must obey his conscience, and receive the penalty which the law imposes. It is always better to suffer wrong than to do it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* It is interesting to trace the association of ideas, which connect the several events and conversations in our Lord's life. Here (if we may trust to the vague note of time conveyed in the words "at the same time," or "in that hour" or "season") we may suppose the minds of the disciples to have been prompted to the question they now put, by the previous conversation with Peter about the exemption of Jesus and his disciples from tribute, as being themselves respectively the Lord and the sons of the Temple, and of the new kingdom.

The greatest in the kingdom.

2. And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3. And said, verily I say unto you, except ye be converted [*turn*], and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6. But whoso shall offend [*cause to fall*] one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.[b]

7. ¶ Woe unto [*alas for!*] the world because of offences [*temptations to fall*]! for it must needs be that offences [*temptations*] come; but woe to [*alas for!*] that man by whom the offence [*temptation*] cometh![c]

Offending members of the Soul.

8. Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee [*cause thee to fall*], cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting [*age-enduring*] fire.

9. And if thine eye offend thee [*cause thee to fall*], pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire [*the fiery gehenna*].[d]

10. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto

b Mark ix, 42.

c Luke xvii, 1, 2.

d Mark ix, 43—48.

3. *Except ye be converted.* Jesus rebukes all the worldly and ambitious thoughts which were rising in their bosoms, by declaring to them that an entire simplicity of nature, an obedient and loving spirit, would be the necessary accompaniments of greatness in the new kingdom. They would, therefore, have entirely to "turn" (the original word is not in the passive voice) from their present ambitious and worldly state of mind before they would even be fit to enter into the kingdom.

5. *One such little child.* One who is *as* such a little child.

6. *One of these little ones.* One of these humble ones who believe in me. This is said not in reference to children, but those who in the simplicity and unworldliness of their nature are like children.—*A millstone.* This mode of punishment was not authorized by the Jewish law, but it was employed among the Greeks and Romans, as well as some of the neighbouring eastern nations, and was among them thought exceedingly degrading. We are too apt, according to our western modes of thought and speech, to take too literally the strong figurative phrases employed, in accordance with eastern usage in the Bible. Our Lord simply means here, that rather than lead a humble, obedient follower of his to stray from the path of right, a man had better be guilty of one of those crimes which involved this disgraceful punishment. And in truth, he that robs me of my peace of mind, my purity of heart and of life, and leads me into sin, is a worse enemy to me than one who takes my coat from my back, or my money from my pocket.

7. *It must needs be.* According to the freedom of action allowed to man, and the constitution of his nature as liable to fall, there will certainly be sins and temptations to sin; but alas both for that man who commits, and that man who tempts to, sin!

8. *Cut them off, &c.* It is said that there have been fanatics who have followed this advice literally. Our Lord's meaning, at least to those who do not think it part of their duty to put out the light of their reason before coming to listen to his commands, is, that it is better to part with any thought, desire, or indulgence dangerous to our spiritual well-being, than to risk our spiritual life itself; just as it would be better to part with a diseased limb, in an affection of the body, than endanger our bodily life. As the body, when dead, might be thrown into gehenna (the valley of Hinnon, outside the walls of Jerusalem, where carcases and refuse were sent to be burnt) so the soul, when dead by sin, would be passed over to spiritual corruption and destruction. It were better to save the one by the sacrifice of a precious member, and the other by the sacrifice of a darling sin.

10. *That in heaven their angels do always behold the face, &c.* To be near the person of the sovereign is always a sign of royal favour, especially in eastern courts, where the

The sheep lost and found.

you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.[e]

12. How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? [*doth he not leave the ninety and nine upon the mountains, and go and seek that which is gone astray*]?[f]

13. And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

e Luke ix, 56. *f* Luke xv, 4—7.

How to deal with an offending brother.

14. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish [*be lost*].

15. ¶ Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.[g]

16. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a

g Luke xvii, 3, 4.

monarch usually lives in a very secluded manner, and is rarely seen in public. The Jews had an opinion (brought back with them probably, as many of their later opinions were, from Babylon), that the soul of every righteous person had an angel, or spiritual representative and guardian. Our Lord adopting this idea, and the phraseology connected with it, conveys the impression of the tender care and favour which God would exercise over all his humble and earnest disciples, by the figure of their angels always being in the presence, standing before the face of the great heavenly monarch, his Father in heaven.

11. *For the son of man came to save that which is lost.* Jesus is especially the comforter and the friend of such as be from any cause—sin, or trial, or bereavement, or poverty or pain—sorrowful and of heavy heart. He did not come to take the prosperous and the happy, and those who are now receiving their consolations, under his healing guidance, so much as these children of sorrow and weakness. Men seldom know Jesus until they feel themselves to be in one or other of the gospel-classes, the sinning or the suffering. Yet those who are free from trial, though they may not *feel* the *need* of Jesus' saving and healing love so much, receive a blessing from it, which heightens and continues all their other sources of happiness, if they walk in the way of his commandments, and receive into their hearts the hope of his promises.

13. *He rejoiceth more.* It is not said that he is *happier* in the one recovered than in the ninety and nine which went not astray, but that he *rejoices* more over it, because he had reason to fear that he had lost it, and surprise attends the pleasure of its recovery, and turns it into *joy*. God is not better pleased with those that fall and are recovered than with those that never fall. The contrary is the truth. But there is more *joy* at the moment in the safety of that which was in danger, than of that which was always secure. A parent is more rejoiced in the recovery of a sick child, which he had feared to lose, than in the continued health of those who had not ailed any thing. But he does not prefer that his children shall be frequently ill, and frequently recovering. On the contrary, he would much prefer that they should be always well. In the same manner, God has more delight in those members of his great human family who keep in the paths of truth and goodness, than in that member of it which goes astray—even if he be recovered. But God desires none to perish, but had rather that all would repent and live.

15. *Go and tell him his fault.* A large portion of the disagreements and quarrels of the world arise from the want of this forbearance. If we would first speak privately and kindly to those who have done wrong, or been unjust or unkind to us, instead of immediately talking and complaining about them, and exposing them to others, a great many breaches might be healed in the beginning, which afterwards, through a want of this kind spirit at first, destroy the peace of families, and separate chief friends.

17. *The church, or congregation.* Among

Sanction of Apostolic authority.

publican [*as the gentile and the tax-gatherer*].

18. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever [*things*] ye shall bind on earth shall [*will*] be bound in heaven: and whatsoever [*things*] ye shall loose on earth shall [*will*] be loosed in heaven.

19. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall [*will*] be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

Forgiveness on confession.

20. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

21. ¶ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven.

23. ¶ Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king,

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the early believers, while the tribunals of the country were heathen, christians had a natural repugnance to bringing those differences and disputes, which they could not settle privately and by mutual consent, before their heathen neighbours. They established, therefore, congregational or church tribunals, before which they argued, and by means of which they settled many of their matters of difference. The same thing, in reference to those offences which are not cognizable by law, is practised among some bodies of modern christians, such as the Congregationalists and Friends. Where public scandal can be prevented and a wider community be spared the knowledge of the trespasses or heart-burnings existing in more limited spheres, great advantage will attend this custom. But where it leads to censoriousness and a spirit of interference and espionage, it must fill a christian community with petty matters of converse and thought, which must lower its general tone of feeling and character.—*As a heathen man and a publican.* The gentile and the tax-gatherer. If he refuse to succumb to your common christian tribunal, follow him not with vengeance, but simply avoid him; regard him as no longer belonging to your community; subject no longer, by his own confession, to your laws, or to the spirit of your Master; but as an alien to your hopes and endeavours, like the gentile or the servant of a foreign power.

18. *Whatsoever [things] ye shall bind on earth, &c.* This is in confirmation of the jurisdiction of the apostolic church. Whatever the apostles by agreement should determine upon, as needful for the general body of the faithful, should receive the sanction of heaven. This is exemplified in the first council (or meeting for consultation) of the apostles in Jerusalem, a full account of which is given in chapter xv of the Acts. We do not see, however, that this power is in consequence conveyed to the 19th century, to synods or general assemblies in Great Britain, or to conclaves in Rome. It may be very suitable to every ecclesiastical as to every civil body, to have a governing and directing power, but their decrees are as liable to discussion as those of any other bodies of men, and cannot possibly carry with them the character of absolute authority and infallibility.

20. *Where two or three, &c.* Wherever the apostles met in their Master's name and spirit, and for the purposes of his holy cause, he would be with them. His meaning is illustrated by a similar and beautiful image found in the Rabbinical writers, "Wherever even two persons are sitting in discourse concerning the law, the divine presence is among them." We must be careful not to conclude that this promise (confined even in the case of the apostles to the occasions of their meeting in the name and for the holy purposes of Christ's religion) can be applicable to ministers of Christ ever since and at the present day, even when not meeting in his spirit, or with a single eye to the promotion of his holy and spiritual kingdom. But to them, as to all Christians meeting in the spirit and for the purposes of the gospel, this blessed promise is still fulfilled in its wider and more general sense.

21. *How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?* Our Lord had instructed them (ver. 15—17) how they were to conduct themselves towards an impenitent offender: he was to have three opportunities of recovering himself. Peter now asks how often forgiveness was to be extended to the offender, who at once expressed contrition and asked forgiveness, and he asks whether it should be double that number of times, whether it should be seven times? Our Lord virtually replies, that our disposition to forgive the really penitent sinner should be un-

The compassionate Master.

which would take account of his servants.

24. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

25. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26. The servant therefore fell down and worshiped [*did obeisance to*] him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence [*denarii*]: and he laid hands

The uncompassionate servant.

on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

34. And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors

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limited—not literally that any one would ever be called upon to forgive another seven times seventy, or 490 times, because no one could really repent of, and yet renew injuriousness any such multitude of times.

24. *Ten thousand talents.* The talent was properly a weight, but was also used as a designation of money value. This was of different amounts; but reckoning the talent used in Jewish calculations roughly as £400, the sum mentioned in the text would amount to four million pounds sterling, and some make the amount sixty or seventy millions. But, taking the former sum as nearer the amount meant, it is of incredible magnitude, especially for *slaves* (for such is the expression used in the original) to owe their master; and even for more dignified creditors, such as princes and sovereigns (as some interpret the "servants" or *douloi* to be) it would be an improbable sum. These considerations should lead us ever to seek for the spirit of the instruction in these illustrations, and not to press too exactly on the letter. "Seventy times seven," and "ten thousand talents," are only numbers loosely taken to bring out the contrast between "seven times" and "a hundred pence," and to shew that, without any exaggeration, such is the proportion of our offences towards God, who is so forgiving to us; and our brother man's offences against us, who are so unforgiving towards him.

25. *To be sold.* According to the Levitical and the Roman law a man who could not pay his debts might be sold; according to the Jewish regulation, till the year of jubilee, or his labour for that length of time was placed at the absolute disposal of his creditor. He might, however, be redeemed by his kindred, and it was expressly enjoined that he should be treated with the greatest consideration.

28. *An hundred pence* [*denarii*]. The Denarius of the Romans was their principal silver coin—something corresponding in commonness and use to our shilling. It originally consisted of *ten asses* (the *as* being a coin something corresponding to our penny). Hence the name Deni-asses, or Den-arius. It was equal in value to about 7½*d.* of our money.

34. *To the tormentors* [*gaolers*]. Called *tormentors*, because they often applied torture, either to punish the offenders committed to their charge, or to extort evidence or confession from them. There was no imprisonment for debt by the Jewish law, nor originally by the Roman; but subsequently the inconvenience and indeed cruelty of the practice of handing over the debtor's body to the caprices of the creditor, led to the more

[*gaolers*], till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.[h]

CHAPTER XIX.

AND it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts [*borders, neighbourhood*] of Judæa, beyond Jordan;

2. And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.[a]

3. ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting [*trying*] him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4. And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them [*made them from the beginning*] male and female,

5. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and

h Mark xi, 26.

a Mark x, 1—31.

convenient as well as the humaner custom of public imprisonment under the sanction of the law. When Palestine became a Roman province, this custom was probably introduced among the Jews. The torture or question was a brutal way of extracting evidence from suspected persons or criminals, which could not be obtained by any other means. The information thus obtained, it is obvious, must have been very unsatisfactory, because most persons, under the agonizing suffering inflicted upon them, would say at last, in the frantic state of their mind, anything that their examiners chose to require from them. These tortures have been used in most countries, and only ceased even in England at the end of the seventeenth century, and in Germany not till the end of the eighteenth. They were contrived on the principle of extracting as much pain from the human body, by means of thumbscrews, racks, wheels, &c. as it could bear without immediate death. The vital parts were left untouched, and the power of the torture was made to bear on the flesh, joints and blood-vessels. It is a striking evidence in favour and in honour of the laws of Moses, that they countenanced no such horrors, but inflicted direct and rapid punishment for clearly proved offences only: and their employment by Christian priests for purposes of religious discipline was a greater scandal and stain upon the Christian religion, a greater infidelity and blasphemy, than any which they themselves either sought to punish or agreed to forbid.

35. So likewise, &c. These analogies between divine and human conduct are of course only designed to be approximations to the truth: they are the best means of realizing to our minds, by appeals to events and feelings familiar to ourselves, the general principles and objects of the divine government. Thus we are here taught, that the severe judger of another must expect himself to be severely judged. A merciful and forgiving disposition will meet with the Divine approbation and forgiveness, an unforgiving with the reverse. The condition of God's forgiveness of us, most frequently and solemnly specified in the Scriptures next to repentance, is the disposition to forgive others in their trespasses against us.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. And came into the coasts [*borders*] *of Judæa beyond Jordan.* That is, probably, instead of going the usual way to Jerusalem, through Samaria, he went through Peræa, and so arrived in the neighbourhood of Judæa on the east or far side of the Jordan.

3. Tempting [*trying*] *him.* The temptation or trial consisted first in asking a question which Herod Antipas (in whose dominions, or in the neighbourhood, the question probably was put) had already decided by his own disgraceful marriage; and thus exposing our Lord, if he replied, to that Prince's hostility: and, second, in the difference that existed among the Pharisees themselves. Some of the school of Shammai maintained that there should be no divorce, except for infidelity in the marriage relation; others, of the school of Hillel, maintained that divorce was permissible simply on the ground of incompatibility between the parties—thus making our Lord obnoxious to one or other of these two schools.

4. And he answered and said, &c. Our Lord answers this question as he does all similar ones that are asked him, by referring to some principle or authority higher than that to which the differing schools themselves actually referred, which they both had to acknowledge. Here he refers to the great primal law of creation and of God, by which one man and one woman were made as com-

and Divorce

shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

7. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8. He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry

and abstinence from Marriage.

another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

10. ¶ His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

11. But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

12. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mothers' womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

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panions for each other, according to which there was no room for divorce or change.—*For this cause*, our Lord says—that is, because God in the beginning made a male and a female to be companions to each other—all other relations of life sink in bindingness, in solemnity and affection, before this: the filial relation itself is inferior to it, and a man shall even leave father and mother, if there be no alternative, and cleave unto his wife, rather than desert her.

7. *Why did Moses then command, &c.* This objection is very well and justly put. If God thus designed, from the example of the first pair, a man and a woman to live indissolubly in wedlock, why did Moses allow in any case of their divorce?

8. *Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, &c.* Moses allowed of divorce in certain cases of confirmed dislike, to prevent an unscrupulous violation of a law of marriage, too strict for the moral condition and feelings of the people, and also perhaps to prevent the ill-treatment of a woman by a husband, by whom she was hated, but from whom she could not free herself. But it was not so in the original design and purpose of God: according to these the marriage-bond was not to be loosened, until it had been broken in fact, and no longer really existed.

9. *And I say unto you, &c.* This is accordingly the law of England. But as, without so gross a violation of the marriage compact, persons may find it impossible to live together in peace, the law allows of legal separations, by which the persons may be protected from each other, without, however, being permitted to marry again. Whatever

modifications the laws relating to marriage may require (and they are, no doubt, very great, for divorce, which is open, on proof, to the rich, is practically impossible to the poor, and there are great and unjust inequalities in their application to men and to women), the indissolubleness, in ordinary circumstances, of the marriage tie is of the greatest importance. It, in the first place, renders persons more careful and considerate before entering into a relation which is to last for life; it provides more security for the support and education of children; it renders the persons married more willing to pardon and bear each others' infirmities: and it renders the relation itself conducive to holiness and spirituality of character, by checking the indulgence of new and wandering desires.

10. *It is not good to marry.* So easy and common does divorce appear to have become under the latitudinarian interpretations of the law of Moses by the Jews of our Lord's time, that even the disciples seem to have thought the stricter principle which our Lord here lays down as so hard, that it rendered it doubtful whether it were not better to abstain from marriage altogether, than not to have the power of dissolving it when inclination prompted.

12. *For there are some eunuchs, &c.* Our Lord says, that the original law and impulse of God is so strong in most men, as to make the number of those who desire not to marry very small. These are, first of all, they who have no natural tendency to marriage, from their birth and by their constitution: secondly, those who have been deprived of that inclination by their fellow-men, so as to render them

Children brought to Jesus.

13. ¶ Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.[b]

14. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

15. And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

16. ¶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17. And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

The rich young man's question.

18. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shall not bear false witness,

19. Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21. Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou

b Luke xviii, 16—30.

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suitable companions and guardians of women (as the eunuchs of the east—the word eunuch meaning guardian of the bed-chamber); and, thirdly, those who, like conscientious monks of our own time, have subdued all original and natural disposition to marriage within them, from a desire to give themselves wholly up to religious works and meditations, and from an idea that, when single and freed from the duties, relations and affections of the married state, they can more fully serve God. Our Lord does not praise or specially recommend this last state, but while asserting the original Divine law of marriage and its sanctity, distinctly permits and sanctions abstinence from it altogether.

13. *Put his hands upon them and pray.* Human nature very greatly resembles itself in all ages: in all ages the benediction of the great and good upon the head of childhood has been sought and valued. Gen. xlviii, 14: "And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid *it* upon Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born." Luke ii, 27, 28: "And he (Simeon) came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms and blessed God and said, &c."—*The disciples rebuked them.* Either because they did not wish to be interrupted, or because they thought the employment too trifling for their Lord to be engaged in. But Jesus told them that, on the contrary, such were the dispositions of which he was in search, as meet, from their simplicity and trustingness, for the kingdom of heaven. Such was our Lord's character of human nature, as it comes uncorrupted from the fountain of God's benignant creating power in each generation.

16. *What good thing, &c.* New teachers are fond of some new doctrine or command, which they elevate above all the others. It is so among us: it was so among the Jews. One recommended the law of tithes, another the law of the sabbath as of special obligation and virtue. The young man supposed that Jesus would have his particular recommendation also; instead of which he throws him back upon the commandments, which the young man said he had always obeyed. He wanted something else, special and peculiar, according to Jesus' view.

17. *There is none good but one, that is, God.* Jesus here disclaims the titles of honour and reverence so lavishly bestowed by disciples on their masters. He even disclaims the ordinary title of courtesy "good," because it properly belonged exclusively to the one Creator of all, "his Father, and our Father, his God and our God." Indeed, the word God, which is Saxon, means "the good one." —*Keep the commandments.* A loving obedience to God here, as everywhere else in the teachings of Christ, is declared to be the one condition of Christian salvation, as it is the one desire of the Christian life.

21. *If thou wilt be perfect.* There was a different test for ordinary disciples and for apostles. The first were to "keep the commandments," the second were "to leave all and follow" Jesus. The young man was not content with the first test: he asked what he yet lacked. Jesus then virtually asks him, if he is prepared to leave his home, disencumber himself of his worldly possessions

How difficult it is for the rich to enter the kingdom.

hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.

22. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

23. ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25. When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

26. But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

27. ¶ Then answered Peter, and

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and objects of interest, meet all the inconveniences and sufferings of apostleship to him, take up his cross and follow him. The young man, unprepared for this test, goes away sorrowful, for he had great possessions, which he was not willing thus to part with. This distinction between ordinary discipleship and apostleship still prevails: they who would be disciples must keep God's commandments; they who would be apostles must, in addition, sacrifice every thing to teach them.

23. *That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.* We do not share in the feeling of difficulty which many readers experience in this passage. The case of the young man fully bears out our Lord's declaration. The meaning is not, surely, that scarcely any rich man can go to heaven, because some of the best men, whom the world has ever seen, have been rich in comparison with many others. Our Lord himself was richer in the possession of the raiment without seam than the majority, probably, of his hearers. An English mechanic is rich to the Hottentot, and it often happens, especially in modern times, that a man must have made himself independent by some honest calling, before he can do disinterested and effectual good to his fellow-creatures. But it is perfectly true that a man abounding, and continuing to abound, in this world's possessions could hardly take up Christ's cross, and become an apostle of his kingdom. This was shewn by the fact, that no rich man joined, or was chosen by, our Lord as one of the twelve. The rich men, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, stood in some measure aloof from Jesus, and were afraid of joining him: indeed, the possession of a boat and nets was found to interfere with the perfect discharge of apostolic duties, and had to be given up. The apostles were to be *ministers of the word:* this was to be their occupation, and the hearts of their disciples were to furnish them with all necessary means. As far as regards the *influence* of external circumstances, great wealth and great poverty are alike *trying* to the higher virtues of character—the one tempts to pride and indulgence, the other to wrong-doing and self-neglect; but the noblest virtues have been found in connection with both states. Nevertheless, by the universal consent of mankind, a mid position between these two extremes is found the most favourable to goodness and to happiness. The apostles never allowed themselves, and were never allowed by God, to be wretchedly poor: when their simple means of life were not furnished them by others, they laboured with their own hands. It was part of Agur's prayer, and may still be part of the desire of the prudent, and they who wish not to be too greatly tried—"Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

24. *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.* Implying a great difficulty. In the Talmud a similar figure is employed, only substituting elephant for camel.

25. *They were exceedingly amazed.* They could not conceive how the cause was to prosper or the kingdom be advanced, if no rich and powerful persons were to join them. It was not the least of the lessons which Christ came to teach, that a true and holy spiritual power is above all other power, and that, when this is really manifested, wealth and power are subject to it, and employed by it, not required to give it influence and sway. No better commentary on the whole of this interview with the young man, and the conversation that ensued with the disciples, can be given, than the Apostle Paul's description of the actual state of "the kingdom," in 1 Cor. i, 26—29. "For ye see your calling,

The Apostles' reward.

said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

28. And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.[c]

29. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

30. But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.

The labourers in the vineyard.

CHAPTER XX.

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny [*a denarius*] a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

c Luke xxii, 28—30.

brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." Therefore "with men" it may appear impossible to do without the rich and great, "but with God all things are possible."

28. *In the regeneration.* In the day of the coming of Christ's kingdom, and of the world's regeneration, or new birth to truth and virtue, when Christ should be acknowledged as the way, and the life, and sit on the throne of his glory, his apostles should be ranged around, partaking of that glory, and next, as it were, to his person. The expression "*sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,*" is the limited and Jewish figure of speech, or picture, under which the more general truth (which time has realized) was couched. It would best convey to minds which had not yet broken through the national types of thought and notions of greatness, the idea of the sway which they, as Christian apostles, should exercise over the whole Israel of God.

29. *And every one.* Not only the apostles, therefore, should receive the reward of the highest glory, but every one who had sacrificed his dearest earthly possessions in the cause of Christ, should receive blessings a hundred fold their value, and everlasting life.

30. *But many that are first, &c.* This verse is the connecting link between this chapter and the next—the transitional point, at which our Saviour passes on from the consideration of the contrast between the present meanness and the future glory of the apostles, to an admonition as to the other changes which would more widely take place in the wider diffusion of the kingdom, when many who were then first in the world's estimation would be last, and many who were then last would be first. As, for example, the Jews who were then the first to have the gospel offered to them, would be the last (as a nation) to receive it, and the Gentiles who would be last to receive the offer, would be first (as nations and peoples) to accept it. The future history of the kingdom further illustrated this in the case of the Apostle Paul, who, though the last, was the greatest of the apostles, and who, though receiving his call after all the others, was more abundant in labours than them all.

CHAPTER XX.

1. *Which went out early in the morning.* The literal wording of the original Greek, though common, has something very touching and beautiful in it—"went out with the dawn"—or "the early morning."

2. *For a penny* [*denarius*] *a day.* The denarius, therefore, or coin of ten *asses*, worth something less than 8d, was the common price of a day's labour in Judæa at this time, as it was in Rome. But what is more remarkable to the English reader, in the year 1351, an English *penny* was literally the price of a day's labour in our own country. The price of labour at that time was regulated by parliament, and "corn-weeders and haymakers, without meat, drink, or other courtesy demanded" were to have one penny per day. But it is not the nominal but the real value of coin, that is, the proportion of articles of necessity and comfort which it will procure, that constitutes a payment large or

The labourers in the vineyard.

3. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place;

4. And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7. They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive.

8. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9. And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny [*a denarius*].

10. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny [*a denarius*].

11. And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

12. Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny [*a denarius*]?

14. Take *that* thine *is* [*thine own*], and go thy way: I will [*choose, wish to*] give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will [*choose, wish*] with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

16. So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

17. ¶ And Jesus going up to

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small; and in the same century in England twenty-four eggs were sold for 1d, a pair of shoes for 4d, a hen for 1d, eight bushels of wheat for 2s, and a fat ox for 6s..8d.

3. *The third hour.* The Jewish day began at six o'clock in the morning. The first batch of labourers may be supposed, therefore, to have been engaged at that hour: the second batch at nine o'clock, or the expiration of the third hour; the third, at twelve o'clock, or the expiration of the sixth hour; the fourth at three o'clock, or the expiration of the ninth hour; and the fifth at five o'clock, or the expiration of the eleventh hour.

7. *Because no man hath hired us.* In the city of Hamadan there is a large *maidan*, or square, which serves as the market place. In this square (says an eastern traveller) "we observed every morning before the sun rose, that a numerous band of peasants were collected, with spades in their hands, waiting, as they informed us, to be hired for the day to work in the surrounding fields. The custom, which I had never seen in any other part of Asia, forcibly struck me as a happy illustration of our Saviour's parable of the labourers in the vineyard, in the twentieth chapter of Matthew, particularly when passing by the same place late in the day we still found others standing idle, and remembered the words, '*Why stand ye here all the day idle?*' as most applicable to their situation; for in putting the very same question to them, they answered us, '*Because no man hath hired us.*'"

16. *So the last shall be first and the first last, &c.* Ending the parable with words similar to those with which it had been introduced. This parable is designed to shew that the times and seasons are in God's hands, and that it is not for us to question the order in which men receive their calls to duty. All that we have to do is, to be ready whenever the call shall come, and to be content with our reward. *All* these men in the parable came at the *first* opportunity: it was not the fault of those entering the vineyard at the eleventh hour that they had not entered it at the first. Though the first called had borne

Announcement of the betrayal.

Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in [*on*] the way, and said unto them,

18. Behold, we go [*are going*] up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

19. And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him:* and the third day he shall rise again.

The petition of the Mother.

20. ¶ Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping [*doing obeisance to*] *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.[a]

21. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the

[a] Mark x, 35—52.

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the heat and burden of the day, they had not been less happy, but probably more so than those who had remained all the day with nothing to do, and with an uncertainty as to their obtaining any employment at all, and consequently any means of subsistence. In like manner, they who are early called into the field of duty or of truth, and who are kept employed in it throughout the day of life, have a reward in their very engagement immeasurably transcending the happiness of those who spend their time in listless idleness. Whatever be the outward similarity of reward, therefore, the early and the late labourer in knowledge and in righteousness cannot be, and are not in reality, rewarded to an equal extent. It is enough that all who obey the call of the Master receive alike the reward which is attached to obedience. Paul, who entered later into the vineyard of the Gospel, and who had the perpetual consciousness of having persecuted Jesus and the saints, could not have the same reward as John who had loved them from the beginning; but both were admitted into the same office and reward of apostleship, for both came when called. The heathen of mature age, converted from his black ignorance, and perhaps brutality, is admitted to the christian name and hopes, as well as the well-conducted Englishman, who has been brought up and spent his life, under the shade of that fair tree; yet their actual reward has not been the same. The lesson this parable is designed to teach us is, that we should not be deaf to the call of conscience, of duty, and of God, whenever made. The call at the morning hour of childhood—the pure and upright life from the beginning—is the happiest and the best (and let those who have christian homes and instructors feel the blessing); but mid-day or evening—maturity or old age—are not too late. Let those who have still to be won to truth and goodness consider it, lest they "stand idle" the brief remainder of their day—and despair.—*For many be called but few chosen.* This has been supposed to have reference to the mode of recruiting for the Roman army, by which all the citizens fitted by their age for bearing arms were each year summoned to the Campus Martius, and a small number of the best citizens chosen from each tribe. Thus in life: of the many to whom the highest privileges are *open*, but few *attain* them. Of the many who hear the sounds of the gospel, but few imbibe its spirit: of the many invited to drink of the fountain of knowledge, but few obey the call. It is always a few who form the nucleus of every great or good undertaking—a few in whom is found the true salt of life wherewith others are salted. Each of us should labour to be one of those chosen.

19. *And shall deliver him to the Gentiles.* That is, the Jews not having any longer, under the Romans, the power of inflicting capital punishments in their own courts, the high priest had to deliver Christ into the hands of the heathen Pilate to secure his crucifixion.

20. *The mother of Zebedee's children.* Supposed to be the person who, in Mark xv, 40, is called Salome.

21. *Grant that these my two sons may sit, &c.* She seems to have been absent from, or deaf to, the parable which Jesus had just been narrating, and certainly could not have heard or understood the solemn and alarming communication just made by our Lord to the apostles, whom he had taken apart from the rest of those who accompanied him. With a mother's love—and here we must add a mother's vanity—her mind had been dwelling on the gorgeous picture which the figure employed by Christ at the close of the preceding chapter had raised in her mind, of the apostles seated on their twelve thrones, her sons among the rest. She now draws near to ask, that to them may be given the honour—the highest accorded in eastern courts—of sitting on the right and on the left hand of the monarch.

Of Zebedee's children.

one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

22. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.[b]

23. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

b Luke xii, 50. John xviii, 11.

Who is the greatest in the kingdom.

24. And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

25. But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.[c]

26. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister [*attendant*];

27. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28. Even as the Son of man came

c Luke xxii, 24—27.

22. *Ye know not what ye ask.* To sit on Christ's right and left hand would be to be pre-eminent in earthly labour, suffering, and obloquy. The mother had scarcely this intention for her sons, in making her unreflecting request. But the attachment of the apostles to our Lord was so great, that the transition from a temporal to a spiritual kingdom, and the inheritance of earthly sorrow instead of greatness, which by degrees it appeared awaited them, which would have been fatal to the attachment of bosoms less sincere, had no influence in weaning these men from their leader. When James and John were themselves, for instance, in this passage, asked whether, instead of the honours their mother besought for them, they were prepared to bear the same sufferings that he should bear, drink of the same cup and be buried in the same billows as Christ, they reply that they are able. Accordingly James suffered martyrdom from Herod (Acts xii, 2), and John was banished to Patmos.

23. *Is not mine to give.* Jesus always declares that his mission was to obey his Father's will. "My meat," he says, "is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." In a similar spirit he here declares, that his followers may share his labours and his sufferings, but honours and dignities he undertakes not to distribute among them—these will in due time be assigned to the worthiest, according to the law and determination of the everlasting Father. The case of the Apostle Paul is a perpetual illustration of the wisdom of our Lord in these conversations, and the short-sightedness of the apostles. It might be given to James to suffer death for Jesus, but not to sit at his right hand, with the Apostle Paul entering into the kingdom.

26. *Let him be your minister* [*attendant*] *Diaconos* or *Deacon.* In its first etymological meaning it signifies one who goes *through the dust* in attendance upon any one—a messenger or footman. Hence more generally an attendant, or servant—one who accompanies another to render him service and convenience. He that would be greatest, then, in the Christian church must do it most service.

28. *Even as the Son of man, &c.* Came not to *receive* benefit or service, but to *confer* it.—*And to give his life a ransom for many.* Not as too many of the princes of the Gentiles, to sacrifice the lives and happiness of others to their own worldly ambition or tyrannical will, but to save those lives by the sacrifice of his own. He that brought a slave or a prisoner of war out of captivity, was said to ransom or redeem him. So God was said (Exod. vi, 6) to have *redeemed* the Israelites from the power of the Egyptians "with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments." In Isaiah (li, 10) "the arm of the Lord" is thus apostrophised: "Art thou not it, which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to

not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

29. And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

30. ¶ And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.[d]

31. And the multitude rebuked them, because [*that*] they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

32. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

33. They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

34. So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

CHAP. XXI.

AND when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,[a]

2. Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me.

3. And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

d Luke xviii, 35—43.

a Mark xi, 1—33. Luke xix, 28—48. John xii, 12—19.

pass over." Thus also our Lord ransoms his followers from sin and darkness, and redeems their souls from misery and wrong: he does this by means of his blessed works and doctrines, his holy patience and submission, his glorious hopes and promises—he does it by his life, his death, and his immortality. We have vestiges of the same forms of expression applied in a less degree to those on whom the mantle of Christ's self-sacrificing and redeeming love hath fallen. We say still of the antient patriot, that he gave his life for his country; and of many modern benefactors of their species, that they sacrificed their lives for mankind. The language is figurative in all these cases, and varies in form; but the spirit is the same in all.

29. *Jericho* is remarkable for being the site of the first city invaded and overthrown by the Jews on their arrival at the Jordan; for forming in later times, with Jerusalem at the other extremity, one termination of a frequented high-way (which is made the scene of the parable of the man who fell among thieves), for having contained a school of the prophets, perhaps under Elisha, and for having, after its destruction by the Romans, risen to be an important place in the crusades. It was called the city of Palm Trees (Deut. xxxiv, 3), from the number of those trees around it. It is now a miserable village called Ericha.

34. *So Jesus had compassion on them.* However the by-standers may rebuke us or scoff at us, let us likewise, when the Lord passes by us, not fail to call and call again, "Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on us;" that he may touch us too, and our eyes may be cleared from those films of mistake or wrong which may now be rendering us blind—may be opened to that blessed light of God, which may pour a perfect day of gladness and safety over our path of life.

CHAPTER XXI.

Bethphage. "The house or place of Figs," as Bethany was "the house or place of Dates." Both of these villages appear to have lain on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, some two miles from Jerusalem; Bethany being rather the nearer to Jerusalem, and therefore entered *after* Bethphage, as it would appear from the corresponding passage in the other Evangelists.

3. *The Lord hath need of them.* Our Lord's direction here to two of his disciples was simply to go into the neighbouring village (Bethphage, apparently), to the stable of some friend or follower, we may conclude, and bring the ass and her colt, which they should there find. If any one interfered with them, they were to say who had sent them, and no further objection would be made.

5. Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

6. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

7. And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes [*garments or cloaks*], and they set *him* thereon.

8. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

5. *Behold thy King cometh unto thee meek, and sitting upon an ass.* The Prophet Zechariah (who lived and preached during the period of the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon under Zerubbabel, between 500 and 600 B. C.) in ix, 9, 10 of his Prophecies thus writes, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion *shall be* from sea *even* to sea, and from the river *even* to the ends of the earth." These words, so illustrative not only of the mere outward manner in which our Saviour now entered Jerusalem, but also of the spirit and objects of his kingdom, naturally occurred to St. Matthew while recording this incident. Whether our Lord had the same passage in his mind, and shaped his mode of entering the city in accordance with it, or whether the coincidence was accidental, cannot be certainly said: for too great stress is not to be laid on the mode of introducing quotations from the Old Testament by the Evangelists, and "this was done in order that it might be fulfilled," we are at liberty to render "this was done so that it was fulfilled." But it seems most probable that the incidents had really reference to the passage in Zechariah. It was in keeping with the material and unspiritualized state of feeling in which the Apostles still were, that the part of the prophecy quoted should be that which had relation to the manner of the Messiah's entrance, and the coming on an ass; and that the beautiful and appropriate description which follows of the peaceful nature and the world-wide extent of Christ's sway, should be omitted. The *ass* was a handsome, valuable, and often highly spirited animal in Eastern countries—very different from the neglected and degenerate animal known to us under this name. It was used by persons of rank, as in II Sam. xvii, 23, by Ahitophel, the head of Absalom's conspiracy against David. "And when Ahitophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* ass, and arose and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died and was buried in the sepulchre of his father." I Kings, xiii, 12, 13. The old prophet of Bethel says to his sons "What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass, and he rode thereon, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak," &c. Horses in the shape of cavalry were forbidden by the Jewish law, in order that the possession of them might not tempt to foreign connections or conquests. The extensive use of the ass in Egypt still, is shown by Olin, who says, "A few public officers and men of wealth are seen on horses in Egypt; but ninety-nine in a hundred of those who ride at all ride on donkeys. These are the finest animals of the species I have ever seen. They are small, but their strength and powers of endurance are truly wonderful. They gallop for two hours with little apparent fatigue, and will carry a man or a heavy burden for half a day without intermission." Though emblematic of the peaceful and unworldly nature of our Lord's mission, therefore, it was not a mean or ridiculous mode of entering Jerusalem which was here adopted.

8. *Spread their garments in the way.* This picturesque homage, the spontaneous act of the enthusiastic people at the moment, was not unknown on other occasions in Jewish history, and has frequent counterparts in the more general history of the East. In II Kings ix, 13, it is said of the captains in attendance upon Jehu, when they learned that he had just been anointed king, "Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets saying, Jehu is King." It is recorded that his countrymen spread their garments on the ground for Cato to walk upon. Ablas II of Persia went out with his nobles seven miles to meet the Prince of the Usbegs, the whole road being covered with rich silks, over which the two sovereigns rode. It was in

The excitement of the City.

9. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

10. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

11. And the multitude said, this is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

Christ casteth out the Money-changers.

12. ¶ And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

13. And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

14. And the blind and the lame

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the spirit of worldly courtesy that our own Sir Walter Raleigh laid his cloak down for Queen Elizabeth to step on.—*Cut down branches from the trees,* which being of the palm-tree, would lie flat on the road, and not obstruct the passage. This custom also was not unknown—neither, in the form of rose and flower-strewn paths, is it now. What is often done now out of worldly pride or selfish expectation, was here the ebullition of an honest and overjoyed populace, ushering, if not their king into his capital, yet their honoured prophet to the Temple of God.

9. *Hosanna, "Save now."* As we might say "God save." Hosanna in the highest would therefore mean, "may the highest degree of blessing and honour light upon the head of the Son of David." During the first seven days of the feast of Tabernacles the custom of the Jews was to go once round the altar, each day, with palm and other branches in their hands, singing Hosanna; but on the eighth day of the feast, they walked seven times round the altar, singing Hosanna; and this was termed "the great Hosanna," in which the *greatest* assistance was besought, both for the nation against its enemies, and for the harvest. This, perhaps, corresponds to the "Hosanna in the highest" of the Evangelists.

12. *Cast out all them that bought and sold in the Temple.* This is supposed to have been that outer part of the Temple called the Court of the Gentiles, into which those worshipers of the Divine Being who were not of the Jewish stock might observe their devotions. As people both of the Jewish and other nations came from various countries to worship at Jerusalem, and required money to make purchases of offerings and sacrifices, as well as Hebrew money for such of them as were Jews to pay the shekel tax with; money-changers, (for their convenience, and perhaps we may suppose also for the convenience of the large multitude of strangers and visitors who came from mere curiosity and as to a spectacle or fair) established themselves in this part of the Temple precincts. Now, they could not have entered the Court of the Temple, which was sacred to the Jews, with such purposes of traffic and exchange, and therefore they remorselessly profaned the place and the hour of Gentile worship, which to them were not equally sacred. This is believed to have been the especial ground of the indignation of Jesus, and the cause of his vindicatory chastisement. For according to the account in Mark, he says "My house shall be called of all nations the house of Prayer," or as it should be rendered "My house shall be called a house of Prayer for all nations (see Isaiah, lvi, 7), but ye have made it a den of thieves," Jer. vii, 11. It is a mistake to regard our blessed Lord as always exhibiting that calm unmoved exterior which he held towards his enemies, or that mild forgiving aspect which he turned towards the sorrowing sinner; for, in contrast with the first, we have the agony in the garden, and with the second his indignant rebuke of the Scribes and Pharisees. The demonstration which he here makes (not necessarily in his own person, but through the permitted agency, possibly, of the excited band of his followers) is not out of keeping, as a symbolic action, and executed in the spirit of the old national prophets, with the character of Jesus as a vindicator of justice and a rebuker of wrong. Probably this act of our Lord's was in full harmony with a general, though subdued, feeling of disapprobation of the practice, entertained by the bulk of the nation, and could not be rebuked, because the custom could not be vindicated, by the party of the priesthood. —*Sold doves.* Levit. v. 7, "And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, unto the Lord; one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering." It was to supply such sacrifices that "they that sold doves" placed themselves in this portion of the temple.

came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased.

16. And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? and Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected [*completed or restored*] praise?

17. ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

18. Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

19. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

20. And when the disciples saw *it*, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

21. Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this, *which is done* to the fig tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and

16. *Have ye never read.* In Psalm viii, 2, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." When those who are old and in stations of honour will not acknowledge the will of God and aid his cause, then the poor and the mean, the humble and unknown, even children, nay, the very stones of the street, will cry out in his praise, and against his enemies.

19. *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.* This has been called one of Christ's two destructive miracles—the other being the loss of the swine. It is a striking tribute to the entire benignity of our blessed Master's life and actions, that the withering of a wild and barren fig-tree, growing on the way-side and belonging to no one, can be so far misunderstood in its spirit and purpose, as to be condemned for its destructiveness. It points to that misconception of Christ's character, which would change its manly force and earnestness into a childish innocuousness; and which would regard it as inconsistent in Christ even to destroy a fig or a leaf, although for the purpose of teaching a nation. As well might we pause while Jeremiah is dashing to the ground the potter's earthen vessel, as a warning to the people of his time of their approaching destruction, and wonder how so good a man should destroy a useful jar, as linger in doubt, when Christ uses the wild fig tree for the purposes of his instruction, whether it was right to destroy a way-side fruit-tree. It is evident that our Lord in his last visit to Jerusalem assumed something of the severe and denunciatory spirit of the ancient prophets. This is the view in which to look at his conduct in the Temple and his cursing of the fig-tree. A tree on the road-side covered with leaves, but bearing no fruit, strikes him as emblematic of the condition of the Jewish people, full of the pretension and foliage of religion, but bearing none of the fruits of piety. In the spirit of the old prophets he denounces in this tree the character and the fate of the great metropolis, and the great people who are about to resist the last invitation to repentance and reformation, the last opportunity of restored fertility and fruitfulness, to destroy the agent by whom these blessings might have been secured, and therein to put the final seal to their own destruction. How soon would that fig-tree, now rich and leafy in all outward appearance, amidst the assembling crowds of its Passover, wither away!

21. *Be thou removed.* Those Rabbis who were very skilful in solving problems and difficulties were called by their admirers "rooters up of mountains." So here, the Apostles, if they were earnest and full of faith, should succeed in removing mountains of difficulties and obstructions in their paths, and cast them into the sea. As this proverb was made use of on the Mount of Olives, it might be in allusion to, or remind our Lord's hearers of, the words of the prophet Zechariah (Zech. xiv, 4,) who in the anticipation of a great approaching spiritual æra speaks in the strong metaphorical language, common to his order, of the potency of the spiritual agencies that should be then at work. The Lord's "feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east,

be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

22. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.

23. ¶ And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?[b]

24. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

26. But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

27. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

28. ¶ But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

29. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

30. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, Sir: and went not.

31. Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans [*tax-gatherers*] and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans [*tax-gatherers*] and the harlots be-

[b] Luke xx, 1—20.

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and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof towards the east and towards the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

22. *And all things, &c.* This is probably a repetition, in a different form, of the promise which our Lord had given to Peter in ch. xvi, 19, and again delivered to the Apostles generally, ch. xviii, 18, 19, in reference to the keys of heaven, their binding and unloosing, the sanction of their decrees, and the fulfilment of their petitions. The general purport of the promise is well explained in I John, v, 14, 15, "And this is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

31. *The publicans [tax-gatherers] and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.* A man has two sons, one of whom promises and professes to obey, and disobeys; the other, making no promise to obey, yet obeys. The one promises good and gives evil, and the other promising nothing but evil, yet repents and gives good. The Scribes and Pharisees were the religious public of our Lord's time, and from them much was to be expected; but, for the most part, they were opposed to John and to Christ, and slew the latter. The publicans and harlots—or irreligious part of the community—consisting of those who could be found to collect the odious Roman taxes (and who must usually have been either very poor or very mean, and therefore represented an outcast and immoral part of the people), and of those whose lives were spent in open profligacy—held out from their very career no promise of religion, but yet flocked round John and Christ in numbers, many of them repenting of their sins and being saved. The tax-gatherers and the harlots, then, though saying by their conduct, "we go not," went into the kingdom of God before those who saying, "we go," went not. To this day, the Christian who says, by his very profession, that he is set to obey his Lord's will, is under greater disgrace if he disobeys than the heathen, and the professor of religion than the careless and immoral.

lieved him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that he might [*so as to*] believe him.

33. ¶ Hear another parable: There was a certain housholder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far [*and left the*] country.[c]

34. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

35. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

37. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39. And they caught [*took*] him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*.

40. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41. They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43. Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

[c] Mark xii, 1—12. Luke xx, 9—18.

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33. *There was a certain housholder, &c.* This would appear to be an appropriate application, on the part of our Lord, of the beautiful parable of Isaiah, but in a sterner form, suited to the more awful nature of the times, and the more impending attitude of the national ruin. Isai. v. 1—7, "Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and he gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: and it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no more upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."—*A vineyard.* The valleys and ridges, the soil and climate of Palestine were favourable to the cultivation of the grape. The vineyard, consequently, was a subject of great care: besides the position of it being carefully selected, the soil cleared of stones, a hut (called here a tower) was placed in it for a guard or watchman to live in.

42. *And did ye never read in the scriptures, &c.* As David, indignantly condemning the rich man in Nathan's parable, unconsciously condemned himself, so the Pharisees here in condemning and assigning the punishment of these wicked husbandmen, decreed their own guilt and chastisement. Jesus turns round upon them, and quoting from Psalm cxviii, 22, 23, forewarns them that the stone which they were about to reject as unfit to be placed in the temple of religion, would be adopted not only as useful for the general purpose of the building, but as suitable to be the head

44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder [*crush him to pieces*].

45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

46. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

CHAPTER XXII.

AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

2. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,[a]

3. And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage.

5. But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

6. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

7. But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9. Go ye therefore into the high [*cross*] ways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11. ¶ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

[a] Luke xiv, 16—24.

or crowning stone of the corner, calculated by its strength and size and beauty to bind and crown and ornament the rest.

44. *And whosoever shall fall on this stone, &c.* This verse belongs to the 42d, and perhaps should follow it immediately. Its tone is in keeping with the sternness of the reprimands and warnings Jesus is now heaping on his enemies, as his end approaches. The metaphor here is taken, possibly, from the accidents and dangers of building: if a man fall against the corner stone before it is raised, he will be hurt or wounded; but if it in its progress to its destined place should fall upon him, it would crush him to pieces. Or the allusion may be to the punishment of stoning, which was usually effected, not by pelting a man to death with small stones, but by letting one, or, if necessary, two large and heavy stones fall upon him from a slight elevation above him. Thus Jesus indicates that if any enter into wilful and perverse conflict with him he will be hurt and injured by it; but if he himself descend upon him with the power of his displeasure and correction, it will be enough to crush him to pieces.

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9. *Go ye therefore into the high* [*cross*] *ways.* To those places where different roads met, and where therefore there were likely to pass more people, coming and going in a greater variety of directions. This parable again conveys the lesson, that the Jews were first bidden to the feast of the Gospel as specially invited and previously prepared guests; but they, from various causes refusing to come, and some of them even going so far as to slay the messengers conveying the invitation, the opportunity of attending the feast would be extended indiscriminately to the Gentiles—to any on the high-way of life who chose to obey the summons.

10. *Both bad and good.* For it was the object of the Gospel to call sinners to repentance, as well as righteous men to their reward.

11. *A man which had not on a wedding garment.* An insult to the hospitable provider of the feast, who was desirous of supplying all his guests with garments suited for the occasion. This person had either kept out of the way so as not to receive one, or

12. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? and he was speechless.

13. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14. For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

15. ¶ Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.

16. And they sent out unto him their [*own*] disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man:* for thou regardest not the person of men.[b]

17. Tell us, therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?

18. But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, *ye* hypocrites?

19. Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny [*denarius*].

20. And he saith unto them, whose *is* this image and superscription?

21. They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render,

b Mark xii, 13—17.

had declined wearing it after he had received it, thus making it appear that the master of the feast had been deficient in generosity. This custom of supplying guests with fitting robes meets us also in Homer. Telemachus, and the son of Nestor, visiting Menelaus at Lacedæmon, were supplied with woollen cloaks and tunics at a family marriage-feast.

13. *Into outer darkness.* Take him outside the hall of entertainment, into the darkness of the ordinary night; not lighted, as the scene of the feast would be, with lamps and torches; where disappointment and vexation would distinguish those excluded.

14. *For many are called, but few chosen* This verse seems to belong to an earlier part of the chapter, and more properly to follow the fifth verse. There are many who are invited by God's mercy to his presence in the Gospel, and plead every trifling engagement as an excuse for not accepting his gracious invitation; some injuring the bearers of the invitation, and others accepting it only to disgrace themselves and the occasion. There are still comparatively few who accept the summons of God, and wear the spiritual garments befitting those admitted to communion with him.

16. *Their* [*own*] *disciples with the Herodians.* The Pharisees might be regarded as representing that party of the Jewish people who desired the national independence, and wished to live under their own law; the Herodians, that, doubtless, increasing party, who perceiving that the Jews could no longer make any head against the great power of the Roman empire, thought it prudent to submit to political necessity, securing to themselves such an amount of national independence, as a friendly understanding with Rome would allow. The national party and the Roman party were thus, we are to suppose, before Christ with the question which divided them, Was it right to acknowledge the sway of Rome by paying tribute to Cæsar, or were they to insist that they were still God's people, owing allegiance to none but Him, and refuse to pay the tribute? The answer to this question it was supposed must render Christ obnoxious to one party or the other, and convict him of unfaithfulness to the national law, or of treason to Rome.

20. *Whose is this image and superscription?* The current coin of a realm indicates the ruling power in the realm—especially the coin paid in taxes is the coin acknowledged by the government. The tribute-money of a country, then, declared in whose hands the government of that country lay. The image or emblem of the sovereign power, with its titles or superscription, would be stamped upon this money. In the case now before Jesus, they were those of the Roman emperor, which decided that the country was under the sway of the Roman emperor, as much as a shilling in England would decide that we were under the sway of William IV or Queen Victoria, or a franc in France shew that that country was under the sway of Louis Philippe or the Republic.

21. *Cæsar's.* The early Roman emperors were called by the common name of Cæsar, after Julius Cæsar. The Cæsar who now ruled was Tiberius.—*Render therefore unto Cæsar, &c.* It is to be remarked that neither

therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

22. When they had heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

23. ¶ The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,

24. Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed [*offspring*] unto his brother.[c]

25. Now there were with us seven

c Matt. xii, 18—27.

our Lord nor the Apostles ever counselled resistance to the civil power in any civil matters. They rendered and they advised obedience to the state in its general commands, as affecting the ordinary duties of life —on the ground that such obedience was necessary to the well-being of the whole—that, for the most part, rulers were a terror to those who did evil, i. e., disturbed the peace, injured or stole the property, or destroyed the lives of their fellow-citizens; and a protection to such as did well, i. e., lived in honesty and quietness. But they neither rendered nor counselled obedience to any command of man which was in opposition to a law of God: such they resisted to the utmost; for they thought it right to obey God rather than man (see Acts v, 27—29). It is our duty to obey the laws of the country, in which God has ordered our lot, in all matters which are not wrong, and do not violate our conscience or our duty to God. If, however, those laws are inexpedient or unjust, we may use our best efforts to change and amend them, without in any way neglecting our Christian duty by so doing. A man ought, however, to be very well assured, on general grounds, before he attempt to resist the laws of his country, that they are wrong and injurious; for no human society could exist if every one yielded to his private and personal likings or dislikings, and made his obedience or disobedience to the state to depend upon these. The rule, therefore, here laid down by our Lord is that which must approve itself to every one anxious both for public happiness and for private rights, especially in the most important and sacred relations; namely, that, as when the state demanded its tribute they were to pay it in the coin of the state, and when the temple demanded its tribute they were to pay it in the coin of the temple (the shekel)—so, when the ruling power asked our obedience to its laws affecting life, and peace, and property, our obedience was to be rendered to it; but, if it asked our obedience as to the thoughts of our souls, the convictions of our consciences, or our worship of God, in these it had no legitimate sway, as our obedience was already due to heaven. The general rule of the Christian's life, then, is to render unto Cæsar, or the civil power, that which by the requirements and necessities of a social state is due to that power; and unto God, those sacred and secret things of the conscience and the soul, over which only the Creator of the soul and the Lord of the conscience can exercise authority.

20. *Which say that there is no resurrection.* The Sadducees, acknowledging as authoritative only the Books of Moses, and not finding the doctrine of the immortality of man declared in them, denied the resurrection of man from the state of death. Their object, in the present conversation with our Lord, was to shew by an imaginary case some of the supposed practical difficulties which attended the belief in a future state.

24. *If a man die having no children, &c.* The law here referred to occurs in Deut. xxv, 5, "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother * * * shall take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her." The object of this singular law seems to have been to promote the unity of families, and avoid the diffusion of property and interests and affections once bound together in the same household. The Sadducees take advantage of the possible results of such a law, and suppose the case of seven brethren having to obey it. They then ask, as all these brothers will be alive together in the future life, of which of them will the woman be the wife? This belongs to a class of questions, by putting which it is very easy to insult religion among coarse and ignorant persons, and to betray our own grossness of mind and character among those who would otherwise, perhaps, have thought better of us. There is nothing more easy for a low mind to do than to cast ridicule on what is sacred or above itself; and this is the reason that low minds are so fond of doing it. The more ignorant, and the more coarse and sensual a man is, the better will he do this. But he will always have his laugh to himself: the well-informed, the refined and devout stand

Of the woman and her seven husbands.

brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue [*offspring*], left his wife unto his brother:

26. Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

27. And last of all the woman died also.

28. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

29. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

30. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

The conditions of earth altered in Heaven.

31. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

32. I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

33. And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.

34. ¶ But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

35. Then one of them, *which was* a lawyer [*teacher of the law*], asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying,

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by in pity and sorrow for the man who thus voluntarily brings out into public gaze the dirt in his own heart. Jesus accordingly addresses himself in his answers to this question to the state of mind in which it originated.

30. *For in the resurrection, &c.* Your question, our Lord replies, has nothing to do with the actual state of things. You know of nothing, and apparently can conceive of nothing, but what is of earth and time. You carry the relations by which the human being is surrounded in life to the future state, when he becomes a spirit—with a new body, new feelings and desires, and consequently new relations. The nature of our social, will then be changed together with that of our personal, existence. These men might as well have asked, because the law enjoined children to obey their parents, whether Abraham and Moses and Isaiah were, in heaven, to live in perpetual submission to their fathers; or because the law enjoined obedience to rulers, whether every man living in the reign of Solomon was to continue to be his subject in heaven. These human relations, adopted for wise purposes connected with our present life, would be altered with the altered circumstances of our spiritual life; and as in heaven there would not be the distinction of bond and free, barbarian and Greek, so the relation of master and servant, child and parent, husband and wife, would all undergo in like manner some great, though to us unrealisable change, and immortal spirits would be as the angels of God. These men, then, erred, not knowing either the spirit of the Scriptures, or the infinite extent of the power, the arrangements, purposes, and dispensations of the Divine Being.

31. *But as touching the resurrection of the dead, &c.* The Sadduces had attempted to prove by a sentence from the law the improbability of men living again: our Lord now, by another sentence out of the law, points out to them how the law itself, which they acknowledge, seems to imply that those who are dead to us, are still living to God.

32. *I am the God of Abraham, &c.* If in the time of Moses, when Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all dead, God declares that he is their God, is not that an indication that they must be still alive? For if Abraham be really extinct, there is no such person as Abraham, and one who does not exist cannot have a God. And, on the other hand, God cannot be God to any thing which does not exist: if therefore he be the God of Abraham, Abraham must exist for him to be God to him. It may be doubted whether our Lord spontaneously chose this passage as affording in itself a satisfactory argument in proof of the immortality of man: or whether he intended to correct by it the levity and sophistry of his questioners, by shewing how a deduction, such as theirs, from the letter of scripture, might be met by another of an opposite and of a loftier description.

34. *They were astonished at his doctrine.* They were delighted and amazed at the ease and success with which he refuted the ablest of his opponents, and defended his own lessons of sacred wisdom.

The two Commandments.

36. Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law?[d]

37. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38. This is the first and great commandment.

39. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

41. ¶ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42. Saying, What think ye of [*the*] Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son* of David.[e]

43. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

d Mark xii, 28—34. Luke x, 25—28.
e Mark xii, 35—39. Luke xx, 41—44.

Why does David call Christ Lord?

44. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

45. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

46. And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

2. Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.[a]

4. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay

a Mark xii, 38—40. Luke xx, 45—47.

36. *Master, which is the great commandment.* The several leading teachers and religious schools among the Jews selected some one commandment as the object of their especial reverence and obedience. This, of course, each was prepared to defend, while each would be equally ready to dispute the claims of any other commandment to be the first. Some declared the law of the sabbath, and others the law of tithe and offering, to be the first. They challenged Jesus to declare which was the first in his estimation, holding themselves, no doubt, ready to impugn his selection unless it did homage to their own. Jesus answered them by lifting them out of the petty disputes and the formal interpretations of the spirit of religion, in which these disputes shewed they were buried, and told them what their own hearts told them too, which were the great commandments—to love God, and to love our fellow creatures. "This is the religion of Jesus (says Dr. Adam Clarke). How happy would society be, were these two plain, rational precepts properly observed! Love ME, and love thy FELLOWS! Be unutterably happy in me, and be in perfect peace, unanimity and love, among yourselves. Great Fountain and Dispenser of love! fill thy creation with this sacred principle, for his sake, who died for the salvation of mankind!"

44. *The Lord said unto my Lord, &c.* These words, form the beginning of Psalm cx, of which the title is, "A Psalm of David." Our Lord's argument is, "What is your belief, and what are your expectations about the Messiah? You acknowledge that he will be a descendant of David. But David, in this Psalm, calls him 'his Lord.' How do you account for David's calling his own remote descendant 'Lord?'" What Jesus wishes his hearers to learn from the train of thought which he thus endeavours to excite in in their minds, is the perception that the Messiah cannot be a mere temporal prince, or else the founder of the monarchy could scarcely call him, being also his own descendant, "Lord." He must, therefore, be higher than David; and this should lead to the conclusion that he must be of a spiritual character and spiritual power. Thus, after warding off those quibbles with which these blind leaders sought to defeat and perhaps to destroy Jesus, he imparts to them one elevating thought of a positive kind, which might employ their minds more usefully than the sophistical dilemmas which they had been framing in order to entrap him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

2. *Sit in Moses' seat.* They read and expound to you the law of Moses.

3. *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, &c.* They give you good advice from the Books of Moses, but bad example from their own conduct.

4. *They bind heavy burdens, &c.* Among

them on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

5. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

6. And love the uppermost rooms [*the upper couch*] at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues.

7. And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

8. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9. And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ.

11. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

13. ¶ But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye

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other things they have introduced a very burdensome traditional and ceremonial law, which they place on your backs and require you to carry; but, unlike humane men, who, when they have laden even their beasts, put their hands against the pile to steady it, they will not even assist you thus with one of their fingers.

5. *But all their works, &c.* They will do nothing to assist you in the path of obedience; whatever they do, is not for your good, but for their own fame and profit.—*Their phylacteries.* The phylactery was a slip of parchment written over with sentences from the law, and was worn on the forehead, the arms, or the edge of the garment, in literal obedience to a figurative command given, Deut. vi, 8, 9, "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." It came at length to be considered a kind of charm or preservative against evil, and to be worn as an amulet. There would have been no harm in the parchment if the previous part of the direction, "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart," had been observed. But when the words of the law came to be written on vellum, but not transferred thence to the tablets of the heart, the parchment became nothing but a hollow show and pretence. And with these men it would appear too frequently, that the less they had of the law in their hearts, the more they put upon their garments—the narrower their obedience, the broader their phylacteries.—*Enlarge the borders of their garments.* In obedience to the direction in Numb. xv, 38. "Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them."

6. *And love the uppermost rooms* [*the upper couch*] *at feasts.* At the entertainments of the ancients a table or tables were spread at the top and down the two sides of the room, leaving space on the outside for the couches of the guests, and in the inside for the passage of the servants supplying and removing dishes, and helping the guests. The top of the room—as with us the cross table, and with our ancestors the *dais* or raised table—was regarded as the most honourable place.

8. *Rabbi.* From the Hebrew *rab*, "great." Be not ye called "My great one."

9. *Call no man your father upon earth.* As you have no spiritual teacher but Christ, have no spiritual father but God. This, however, is precisely the title assigned to the head of the Roman Catholic Church, *Papa*, Holy Father; and to the English bishops, "Right Reverend Father in God." It is only usage that can reconcile us to these high designations, or conceal from us the presumption with which the adoption of them is chargeable.

11. *He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.* This may be termed a specially Christian doctrine, that he is most great who most serves. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," and he is the greatest among his followers who in the same spirit gives himself most up and with most effect to love and serve mankind. This humbling of himself to do good is a man's true greatness; and the lifting up of himself above doing good is a man's real humiliation and disgrace.

shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.[a]

14. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation [*a heavier judgment*].[b]

15. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell [*gehenna*] than yourselves.

a Mark vii, 2—23. Luke xi, 39—52.
b Luke xx, 47.

13. *Woe unto you!* The spirit of this chapter is evidently denunciatory: compassion is not its prevailing tone, but indignation. Words that might come with overwhelming power, however, from the lips of one who spake with authority, and was himself without sin, may be very presumptuous and unbecoming from one weak mortal to another. While we should, indeed, strive to follow in our Lord's footsteps to the best of our power, there are some directions in which to imitate his example we ought to possess the same authority and the same moral right as he did.

Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. They set themselves against Christ's preaching—the establishment of his kingdom—so as not only not to allow of its exercising any influence over their own hearts, but so as to prevent others feeling that influence who were disposed to yield to it.

15. *To make one proselyte.* Though no man, not born a Jew, could become one, yet a man might accept the religion of the Jews without belonging to their stock and nation. Provision was made for this occurrence, in itself so desirable, by the regulations for admitting proselytes or converts. Proselytes were of two kinds—the first, accepting the general principles of Jewish faith, were called Proselytes of the Gate; they might enter the outer court of the temple, and worship in what was thence called "the court of the Gentiles." The second, receiving circumcision and submitting to all the laws of Moses, were called Proselytes of Righteousness. In our Lord's time the desire to multiply these proselytes became very great. In earlier times the Jews converted persons who lived amongst them, for obvious purposes of convenience and order in their own families and nation. But at this period they went beyond their own country, "compassed sea and land," and gave themselves up to an aggressive proselytism. Horace, at Rome, was saying, in the same generation, "Like Jews, we will force you to come over to our sect." Now, it very much depends on who and what the converter is, who and what the converted shall be. A righteous man will endeavour to convert to righteousness; a sectarian, to his sect; a Pharisee, to Pharisaism. There is danger of a proselyte adopting the bad as well as the good; and sometimes he will only adopt the bad of those to whom he attaches himself. In the conversion of savages to European Christianity there has too often been simultaneously a conversion to European vices. The native has accepted Christianity and drunkenness—Christianity and hypocrisy—from the Christians who have brought him both. This may be only a stage on the journey to better things, but it is a melancholy stage; and while in it, perhaps, the genuine Christian may say of the poor savage, when contrasting his ignorance and simplicity with his knowledge and his vices—as our Lord said of a man converted not to Judaism but to Pharisaism—that he is made two-fold more a child of hell than those who profess the religion to which he has been converted.—*Child of hell* [*gehenna*]. Gehenna was the word which—(literally meaning the land of Hinnom, the valley of that name lying south of the walls of Jerusalem, where had been offered the detestable sacrifices of children's lives to Moloch, and where still was the fire in which the refuse and unburied carcasses of the city were burned)—was figuratively used to denote the place or state of sorrow, suffering, sin, and spiritual ill of every kind. As a faithless man was "a son of Belial;" as one who deserved to be beaten was "a son of stripes;" one condemned to die "a son of death;" as a wicked-minded man was "a child of the devil," so here, one storing up for himself, by his opposition to what is good and love of what is false and bad, wrath against the day of wrath, is called "a child of gehenna." A practical confirmation of the truth of our Lord's remark is afforded by the declaration of Justin Martyr to Trypho the Jew. "Your proselytes not only disbelieve Christ's doctrine, but blaspheme his name as much again as yourselves."

Swearing by the Temple and the gold.

16. Woe unto you, *ye* blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor [*bound*].

17. *Ye* fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18. And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty [*bound*].

19. *Ye* fools and blind: for whether *is* greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20. Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

22. And he that shall swear by

Attending to trifles and careless about great things.

heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

23. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24. *Ye* blind guides, which strain at [*out*] a gnat, and swallow a camel.

25. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess [*rapine and injustice*].[c]

26. *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27. Woe unto you, scribes and

c Luke xi, 37—54.

16. *By the gold of the temple.* Not the gilded ornaments, but the treasury of the temple, which the Scribes and Pharisees in their avarice were willing to have the people think more sacred, more inviolable than the temple itself.

18. *By the gift that is upon it.* Again shewing their covetousness; for if a man wanted to make his oath more sacred, he would have to put a gift upon the altar, that he might swear by the gift.

23. *Tithe of mint, &c.* They were as scrupulous in their obedience to some commands as they were unscrupulous in their disobedience to others. They were very punctilious in obeying the law which commanded the payment of the tenth of their produce to the purposes of religion and the support of the poor, so as even to make a return not only of the great crops and larger produce contemplated by the law, but of every little aromatic plant, or kitchen-herb, that grew in their gardens; but they forgot the command which spoke of "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God." *Mint*, it is said, was used to strew the floors of the houses and the synagogues with, on account of its fragrance. *Anise*, rather *anethon*, or dill, used as a condiment in cookery, and a warming and soothing drink in medicine. *Cummin*, the seeds of which are still used in Egypt as a seasoning for bread.

24. *Which strain at [out] a gnat.* In order to avoid swallowing any insects which might have fallen into beverages exposed in larger vessels, they were poured through a strainer into the cup out of which they were drunk. In addition to this common practice, it is thought that allusion may also be made to a superstitious and ridiculous fear of the Pharisees, that, unless they were very careful in this way, they might, by swallowing a gnat or fly, violate the law, which forbad them to eat certain "flying creeping things."—*Swallow a camel*; mentioned as the largest animal commonly known to the Jews. With this proverb corresponds the Arabian one, "He swallows an elephant, and is strangled by a flea:" both intended to expose that mistaken scrupulousness which carefully avoids a trifling irregularity, and falls instead into some great omission or crime.

25. *But within they are full, &c.* Your cups and plates are clean to the eye on the surface, inside and out; but look what they contain, what is within them? the produce of your extortions and injustice!

26. *Cleanse first that which is within.* Make what you eat clean from widow's tears, and orphans' curses, and then by the eye of Heaven no fault will be found with the vessel in which you eat it.

27. *Whited sepulchres.* It was a defilement to the Jew to touch a dead body or a

They are like whited sepulchres. Their spirit of wickedness and persecution.

Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

28. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

30. And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33. *Ye* serpents, *ye* generation [*offspring*] of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell [*condemnation of gehenna*]?

34. ¶ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify; and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city:

35. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous

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sepulchre; that is to say, he was always careful to wash, purify himself, and remain in some degree apart after performing a necessary office in connection with the dead. In this feeling, partly sanitary and partly partaking of a desire for religious purity, originated the custom of whitewashing sepulchres of all kinds every year in the month of February, that no one might be defiled unawares. The outside, therefore, would appear very clean and pure, whereas the inside would be full of death and corruption. This simile represents the Pharisaic character in the most revolting light possible. The Jews always interred outside their cities, unless in special cases, such as the burials of royal persons.

29. *Ye build the tombs.* There are few employments more interesting than to observe the association of ideas—the law of transition—by which our Lord passes on naturally and easily from one topic of discourse to another. The mere employment of the simile about "sepulchres" in v. 27 suggests another serious charge against the Pharisees, relating to their disposition to honour dead saints and prophets, and destroy living ones—a charge to which the worldly, the conventional, and the hypocritical of every age are also exposed. They were rebuilding, keeping in repair, ornamenting the tombs of the great departed, and making ready a new tomb for one now among them, who was greater than all the departed.

31. *Ye be witnesses, &c.* In the expression you employ, "the days of our fathers," you acknowledge that you are their children, by lineage: so you are by spirit: fill up the measure of your fathers with deeds like your fathers'. It is a sad thing to reflect how many of those who are now called after Christ's holy name, would, had they lived in his own time, most certainly have reviled him as a democratic leader, an innovator, a disturber of the public peace, instead of venerating him as the sent of God and the Messiah. Alas! that we might ourselves have been amongst that thoughtless number, nor beneath the common attire, and the humble life and connections and appearance of Jesus, have discerned the Lord's spirit! This thought alone, that we might have condemned him with the Pharisees, or cried "crucify him" with the crowd, should prevent any of us applying to our own fellow-creatures the terrible and crushing denunciations, which none but the perfect and the spotless had a right to pronounce.

34. *Prophets, and wise men and scribes.* Jewish titles, by which he indicates his own Apostles and Evangelists. Of these some were stoned, like Stephen; some slain by the sword, like James; many scourged, like Paul; and some, tradition says, were crucified, as Peter.

35. *Zacharias, son of Barachias.* The only Zacharias whose death is recorded in the Old Testament, as taking place under these circumstances (II Chron. xxiv, 20, 21) is there called the son, not of Barachias, but of Jehoiada. Some have explained this discrepancy by supposing that Jehoiada, like many other of

Lament over Jerusalem.

Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not![c]

c Luke xiii, 34.

the Jews, had two names—Barachias and Jehoiada; others, by supposing that some early copyist, supposing that the allusion here by our Lord was to Zecharias the Prophet, who was the son of Barachias, added the father's name to the account: others, again, by supposing that it is some third Zacharias that is referred to. It is a matter of little practical importance. Our Lord's meaning is clear, that on such dispositions as were manifested by the Pharisees of that generation, the destruction of all the innocent lives in the world, from Abel to one of the last deaths recorded in the Old Testament historical books, lost in the cause of God and truth, were to be charged.

36. *Upon this generation.* Forty years had scarcely elapsed from the time of Christ's death before all the things spoken of in the 34th verse had been done by the Jews; whilst their city lay overthrown, and themselves conquered and scattered.

37. *O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!* The transition here from indignation against the criminal leaders and populace of Jerusalem to pity for the ancient city itself and its many prophets and righteous men, is natural to a soul so highly excited by mingled grief and anger, as that of our Lord was when uttering the warnings and rebukes of this fearful chapter.

38. *Your house.* The temple, from which Jesus now departed, and in which he now uttered his last word of warning.

39. *Till ye shall say, &c.* They should never see or hear him more, until they were prepared to receive with reverence even him who came in his name. This was the last warning of his earthly voice; but when their hearts, or the hearts of any should be converted to receive him, there would he then be in the spirit among them.

The Disciples point out the Temple buildings.

38. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple.[a]

a Mark xiii, 1—37. Luke xxi, 5—36.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. *For to shew him the buildings of the temple.* That is, to contemplate and examine with him, in wonder and admiration, the glories of their great national edifice (we must remember that they did not live in Jerusalem, but came from Galilee), not to shew them to our Lord as though he had been an absolute stranger. The first temple was built by Solomon about a thousand years before Christ, his father David having collected the materials and made the necessary preparations. A full description of the work is given in 1 Kings v—viii. After having stood for more than 400 years, this temple of Solomon's was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, of which there is an account in 2 Kings, xxv, 8—17 The *second* temple was commenced about 530 years before Christ, by Zerubbabel, on the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, by permission of Cyrus. Of the building of this second temple an account is to be found in Ezra iii—vi. This second temple, again, was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and, including the various additions made by subsequent sovereigns at intervals, could only have been very recently completed at the time of our Lord's public ministry; for Herod began it about twenty years before the birth of Jesus, and the Jews say (John ii, 20) that it had occupied forty-six years in building. This fact of its comparatively recent completion explains the special attention and admiration which the disciples give and call to it, and renders still more startling and impressive the assurance which our Lord gives them, that before that generation had fully passed away, this so newly erected and gorgeous building should be utterly destroyed. Accordingly, in the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, son of Vespasian, the Emperor of Rome, A.D. 70, the temple was

When shall these things be?

2. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.[b]

3. ¶ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, When shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [*age*]?

4. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

Deceivers and wars.

5. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am [*the*] Christ; and shall deceive many.

6. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and

[b] Luke xix, 44.

burnt down (though Titus himself was anxious to preserve it), being set on fire by a brand cast into it by a soldier in the Roman army.

2. *There shall not be left here one stone upon another.* This was literally true, as far as related to the buildings as they then contemplated them, namely, the portion of them which they saw and which appeared above the ground. The temple was ploughed over subsequently to its destruction, and finally nothing of the temple was left but the foundations of some of the outer walls, a portion of which still exists undisturbed.

3. *Mount of Olives,* from which he overlooked the temple, and its goodly courts and buildings.—*The sign of thy coming:* they evidently thinking that Jesus himself would come to accomplish this work of destruction, and bring about this awful termination of the age, or dispensation of things, in which they lived.

5. *Many shall come, &c.* Such as Simon Magus (Acts viii, 9, 10), who bewitched the people of Samaria, and was called "The Great Power of God," and the Theudas, (mentioned by Josephus), who persuaded a multitude of people to follow him with their best effects to the river Jordan, which he promised to divide for their passage. There had been others previously and during the earlier part of our Lord's life, such as Judas of Galilee (alluded to by Gamaliel, Acts v, 37), who raised an insurrection against the census (called in the Acts "taxing") which the Roman government ordered to be taken, and whose followers re-appeared before the destruction of the temple; and the Theudas, also mentioned by Gamaliel (Acts v, 36), who boasted himself to be somebody, and was slain with about 400 of his followers. Among the most interesting of these insurgents (notwithstanding still deservedly ranked as a false prophet, because, though his object was good, his spirit and the means he employed were mistaken), was Matthew (supposed by some to be the same as the above Theudas), who "raised in the latter days of Herod the Great a band of his scholars, in order to effect a social reform, by destroying the heathen works which the king had erected, contrary to the law." These were different struggles to recover the nation, and redeem it from its political degradation; but, like all efforts not founded on moral means, on representation, persuasion and conviction—on a spiritual and mental change, in short—they led only to the suffering of those who commenced them, and to the aggravation of the evils complained of.

6. *Wars and rumours of wars.* "In one year and a half, four Roman emperors, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, suffered violent deaths. The empire was thrown into tremendous convulsions, and its provinces filled with wars and rumours of war. In Palestine, Syria and Egypt many thousands were slain in the most horrible massacres." Whatever be the actual number of wars in any given century of human history, there are usually still more *rumours* of them. The tendency to feel alarm in some, and the love of exciting it in others, lead even in times of peace to many reports and expectations of war. We of modern times, in reference to such, should bear in mind our Lord's counsel to his disciples, "See that ye be not troubled: for the end is not yet." War is one of those terrible evils which almost invariably creates far greater evils than it removes. It is the result of national bad passions, national envy, hatred and injustice: it will cease when these shall be subdued, and when mankind find other means of settling their disputes, more like those employed by rational beings, and less like those employed by brutes.

7. *Famines, pestilences and earthquakes.* A famine took place in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, referred to in Acts xi, 28.

Many shall fall before persecution.

pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

9. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

The faithful saved.

12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14. And this gospel [*this the good message*] of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

15. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the

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Pestilences usually follow famines from the debility induced by want. In the same reign several earthquakes are mentioned, as having taken place; one is particularly interesting to us, as the forerunner of the total destruction of Pompeii by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The admonitory earthquake took place A.D. 63, the fatal eruption A.D. 79.

8. *The beginning of sorrows,* and nothing in comparison with the frightful sufferings and evils which would come upon them in the siege and destruction of their own city and temple.

9. *Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.* The persecutions of the followers of our Lord, as recorded in the Acts, are here alluded to; that of Peter and John, who were imprisoned for a day (Acts iv, 3), that of Peter and other apostles who were again imprisoned (Acts v, 18), that of Stephen, who was stoned to death (Acts vii, 59), that of Paul, whom the Jews sought to kill (Acts ix, 23), that of several members of the church, and of James who was put to death by the sword (Acts xii, 1—3), and that of Paul again, who was nearly stoned to death (xiv, 19), whose life was plotted against (xxi, 31), and who was finally imprisoned at Rome; with which event the account of his life in the Book of Acts closes. These persecutions became afterwards much more extended, and were taken up by the Romans. There are counted ten general persecutions by the Romans, of which the first, under Nero, was confined principally to Rome, and is said to have been the occasion of the deaths of St. Paul and St. Peter; and the last was under the Emperor Diocletian, A.D. 303, a very severe one, which spread all over the Roman empire, and was intended, no doubt, to exterminate the religion; for the churches of the Christians were destroyed, their books burnt, and every cruelty practised against themselves to compel them to renounce their faith. But they that endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. A few years afterwards Constantine the Great restored to the Christians peace and liberty, and became a Christian himself. How should the lessons of history teach and encourage ourselves to be faithful to our own convictions in points of practical duty or of religious truth, even though we be hated of all men for Christ's name's sake!

12. *The love of many shall wax cold.* Many will leave a good cause if it be persecuted, or if any of its professed adherents entail dishonour upon it by unworthy conduct. They cannot bring themselves to support any thing which is not already acknowledged by the world to be respectable. Alas! where would the gospel have been now, had it had no better supports than these?

14. *In all the world for a witness unto all nations.* The Apostles, we know, preached the Gospel in Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor; and there is reason to believe, much more widely. But these expressions are always to be interpreted more moderately, when occurring in eastern writings, than they would always be in western. Thus, St. Luke, speaking of the census of the Roman empire, says, that "there went out a decree from Augustus Cæsar that *all the world* should be taxed:" Luke ii, 1.

15. *The abomination of desolation.* Perhaps the Roman army and ensigns approaching the city—perhaps the conversion of the holy temple into a citadel of defence, and the presence of the Jewish zealots and soldiery in it. The words of Daniel are, "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." Dan. xi, 31.

The hasty flight.

holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand):

16. Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains:

17. Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And woe unto [*alas for*] them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days![c]

20. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day:

21. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

c Luke xxiii, 29.

False Messiahs.

22. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's [*chosen*] sake those days shall be shortened.

23. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* [*the*] Christ, or there; believe *it* not.[d]

24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect [*chosen*].

25. Behold, I have told you before [*hand*].

26. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.

27. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto

d Luke xvii, 23.

16. *Flee into the mountains.* Eusebius, following a tradition in the church, declares that all the Christians fled from Jerusalem, and went to Pella, where they remained safe. The following verses indicate the necessity of extreme haste in this flight, so that those who were in any way weak or encumbered would have difficulty in escaping. According to Eusebius, it was in the interval between the raising of the siege by the general in command and the re-investing of the city by Vespasian's forces, that the Christians escaped.

17. *Not come down.* He had better flee along the roofs even (which were flat and communicated with each other) than delay, by re-entering his house for any thing.

20. *Neither on the sabbath-day.* All thoughts connected with speed and haste are here collected together to render the impression deeper, and, among others, the idea of the interruption which would be occasioned by a sabbath-day, on which the Jewish usage allowed but of short walks of a mile or so.

21. *Tribulation, such as was not, &c.* Although these expressions are to be interpreted in the modified manner pointed out in the note on verse 14, yet nothing could exceed the miserable condition of the Jewish people at the time here referred to: torn to pieces by internal disputes—goaded into rebellion by the insults and rapacity of their governors, especially of Florus, the Roman Procurator—their lives and possessions rendered entirely insecure by the multitudes of robbers and assassins with which their land was filled—and, finally, crushed to the earth by a siege, during the progress of which the dearth was so great that one mother devoured her own infant, and the end of which was the slaughter, captivity, or crucifixion of almost all the inhabitants, and the utter overthrow of the temple and city.

22. *For the elect's* [*chosen*] *sake, &c.* If such calamities had continued but a little time longer, all must have perished; but, for the sake of those chosen persons, who were selected by Providence out of this nation, and were destined to carry on the world-wide work of Christian truth and salvation, they were brought to a close, so as to admit of the survival of some.

24. *Deceive the very elect* [*chosen*]. These false prophets should make such pretensions, and promise such wonderful things, as almost to beguile those who were assured that Messiah had already come, and who were chosen to bear on the truth.

26. *He is in the desert—secret chambers.* Some of these false prophets decoyed the people into the desert, under pretence of some great deliverance, though they perished there miserably. One, Josephus says, led them into the temple *(secret chambers)*; but the Romans set fire to the place in which they were, and they were consumed in the flames.

27. *For as the lightning.* His coming

The coming of the Son of man.

the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.[e]

29. ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31. And he shall send his angels [*messengers*] with a great sound of a

e Luke xvii, 37.

These sorrows the signs of his coming.

trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect [*chosen ones*] from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32. Now learn a parable of [*from*] the fig tree; When his [*its*] branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh:

33. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

34. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

35. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

36. ¶ But of that day and hour knoweth no *man* [*one*], no, not the

shall be as quick as the lightning and as manifest. Do not, therefore, trust to the protracted deceits of these false prophets, or their doubtful signs.

28. *Wheresoever the carcase, &c.* As where the carcase is, the birds of prey gather, so, when this nation is utterly dead, its consumers will be at hand. Some think that allusion is here made to the Roman armies, of which the eagle is the ensign.

29. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days.* Here is described, in the striking phraseology of eastern metaphor, the desolation which should prevail after the events just described had taken place, and the new world and new glory which should arise upon this desolation in the preaching of the Gospel, and the coming of the Son of Man in great power. The due force to be attached to the language in which this is conveyed will be best understood by comparing with it the words used by the prophet Isaiah to denote the fall of Babylon; and again, in another place, the coming of gladness and prosperity to Zion. In reference to the first, he says (Isai. xiii, 9—13), "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate"—"for the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine"—"I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place." In reference to the second, after saying (Isai. xxx, 23—26), that there shall be abundance of rain and wheat, he adds, "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

31. *And he shall send his angels* [*messengers*]. His messengers and apostles shall go forth into all parts of the world, gathering into the kingdom of his truth all the chosen recipients of his word.

32. *Parable of* [*from*] *a fig-tree.* As the budding of the fig-tree betokens the immediate approach of summer, so certainly will the occurrence of the things I mention betoken the nearness of the consummation of which I warn you.

34. *This generation shall not pass.* Even among those that heard him, John, if not others, survived to see the events here foretold. Many others of that generation, younger than John, would, of course, do the same.

36. *But of that day, &c.* The precise day and hour of these events he himself did not know, but only the Omniscient Father. This is still more strongly expressed in Mark xiii, 32. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man [one], no, not the angels that are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Our Lord, therefore, denies his knowledge of it in every capacity which can be predicated of him. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is alone omniscient.

Narrow escapes.

angels of heaven, but my Father only.

37. But as the days of Noe [*Noah*] *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.[f]

38. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe [*Noah*] entered into the ark,

39. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40. Then shall two [*men*] be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.[g]

41. Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.[h]

42. ¶ Watch therefore: for ye

f Luke xvii, 26, 27. *g* Luke xvii, 36.
h Luke xvii, 35.

The necessity of watchfulness.

know not what hour your Lord doth come.

43. But know this, that if the goodman [*master*] of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.[i]

44. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his houshold, to give them meat in due season?[j]

46. Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

47. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

i Luke xii, 39. *j* Luke xii, 42—51.

37. *Noe.* Noe is the Greek form of the name—Noah, the Hebrew.

39. *Knew not.* Regarded not—thought not of—believed not in—the coming destruction.

40. *The one shall be taken, &c.* Shewing the narrow escapes that shall then take place; so that of two people apparently in exactly the same circumstances, one shall, by some slight and almost imperceptible advantage, or superiority in expedition, escape, and the other be detained, and involved in the horrors of the war and siege. Or the allusion may be to the mixed nature of the population, whereof part shall be Christian, believing in the warning given them, and fleeing; and part, like the men in Noah's time, unbelieving, and taken. The words must be received broadly, as shewing the suddenness of the separation and flight.

41. *Two women shall be grinding, &c.* People shall be engaged in their usual occupations, just as though nothing particular were about to happen. The men shall be in the field, engaged in their agricultural employments, the women at home occupied with their domestic duties. The quantity of corn wanted for the family each day was ground usually by the women. Dr. Clarke, the traveller, mentions what he saw at Nazareth in illustration of this custom: "Scarcely had we reached the apartment prepared for our reception, when, looking into the court-yard belonging to the house, we beheld *two women* grinding at the mill. They were preparing flour to make our bread, as is always customary in the country when strangers arrive. The *two women*, seated upon the ground, opposite to each other, held between them the two round flat stones, such as are seen in Lapland, and such as in Scotland are called "querns." In the centre of the upper stone was a cavity (hole) for pouring in the corn; and by the side of this an upright wooden handle for moving the stone. As the operation began, one of the women with her right hand pushes this handle to the woman opposite, who again sent it to her companion, thus communicating a rotatory and very rapid motion to the upper stone; their left hands being all the while employed in supplying fresh corn as fast as the bran and flour escaped from the sides of the machine." Sometimes the mill was larger, as now, and the stones, instead of being portable, were fixed. These were sometimes worked by hand, and sometimes, as now, by asses or mules.

45. *Ruler over his houshold, to give them meat.* A description of the office of a house-steward, who was to apportion their rations to the servants and labourers of the establishment.

47. *Ruler over all his goods.* He will promote him from being house-steward to be general agent and manager.

The presumptuous servant.

48. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49. And shall begin to smite *his* fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50. The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51. And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

CHAPTER XXV.

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

The wise and foolish virgins.

2. And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.

3. They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone [*going*] out.

9. But the wise answered, saying, *Not so;* lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

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51. *Shall cut him asunder, &c.* Shall cut him off from his service, and place him among the hypocrites, and those who serve with eye-service, who appear to their employers to be faithful, but are not just towards God—among, as Luke expresses it, the "unbelievers," or rather "the unfaithful." In all hot countries the passions have more vehement and exaggerated expression than with us; and the demonstrations of grief, on the part of a man detected in dishonesty, and punished or dismissed his master's service in consequence, were accordingly violent. A prisoner, when he has received his sentence, or a man when he is dismissed an employment for bad conduct, among us, seldom shews immediate signs of strong feeling; but in southern and eastern countries, and especially in more primitive times, this would be accompanied by violent gestures, loud cries, weeping, tearing of the hair, and gnashing of the teeth. Among persons thus punished and thus overwhelmed with grief, the unfaithful steward would have his portion appointed.

This chapter has been regarded as descriptive of the day of death and judgment; and though originally referring to the dreadful catastrophe then hanging over the Jewish nation, it is most truly applicable to ourselves and to mankind of all ages—who ever live in the near neighbourhood of that great and solemn event (of which they know not the day or the hour), in which the temple of their bodies and the city of their earthly habitation shall be destroyed, and when, if they have not a temple of the spirit, a city of God, wherein to take refuge, as immortal beings, they will indeed be desolate, and carried away as with a flood.

CHAPTER XXV.

1. *Went forth to meet the bridegroom.* The picture here represented is that of a marriage, in which the bridegroom would seem to be bringing his bride to her future home. Her female friends and neighbours assemble to give her welcome. They had provided themselves with lamps, wherewith to go out to meet the procession on its approach. Some of them had been so improvident as not to take a supply of oil with them, which might be ready for them to dress their lamps, in case of need. They calculated on the procession arriving at the precise time appointed, and were not prepared for any delay. The more prudent of them, however, had brought an extra supply, so that if the light should consume all that was first put in the lamps, they might trim them afresh. In waiting for the bridegroom, who happened to be late, they all fall asleep, and are then awakened by the announcement of his approach, when it is found that so long a time has elapsed, that the lamps are dying out: the prudent virgins trim theirs with their store; their improvident companions have no such means of re-

The punishment of negligence.

10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.[a]

11. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.[b]

a Luke xiii, 25—28. b Mark xiii, 32—37.

The distribution of the talents.

14. ¶ For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man travelling into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.[c]

15. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

c Luke xix, 12—27.

kindling their lamps. The supply is not sufficient for all; and while the improvident virgins go to buy some, the bridegroom arrives, is met by those who are ready, enters his house, the concluding ceremony is entered on, the doors are closed, and the unprepared attendants are excluded.

10. *And the door was shut.* A traveller among the Hindoos, referring probably to an earlier ceremony of the wedding-day, when the bridegroom goes to fetch the bride from her father's house, and when, probably, his male friends there came out to meet him, says "At a marriage, the procession of which I saw some years ago, the bridegroom came from a distance, and the bride lived at Serampore, to which place the bridegroom was to come by water. After waiting two hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced as if in the very words of Scripture, 'Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.' All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession: some of them had lost their lamps, and were unprepared; but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward to the house of the bride, at which place the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area before the house, covered with an awning, where a great multitude of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats. The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed upon a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut, and guarded by sepoys. I and others expostulated with the doorkeepers, but in vain. Never was I so struck with our Lord's beautiful parable as at this moment: 'And the door was shut!' I was exceedingly anxious to be present while the marriage formulas were repeated, but was obliged to depart in disappointment."

12. *I know you not.* They had not given the customary tokens of friendship and respect by being in attendance on his arrival, and he did not therefore know to whom he might be opening his doors, if he admitted those who, to all appearance, had no more claim to be admitted than any other strangers, or curious persons who might be hovering about the mansion.

13. *Watch therefore, &c.* The previous parables had indicated the unexpected speed with which the Lord might arrive, this the unexpected *delay*, after which he might come. Some are unprepared, because they had not *begun* to wait, some because they are weary of waiting. It is ours to wait in our duty, to watch at our post, at whatever hour the Lord cometh, early or late. It is sometimes more trying and laborious to *wait* for a tardy, than to be ready for an early, visit. God requires patience from us, and a willingness to wait His call, as well as expedition, and a readiness to receive it.

14. *Called his own servants, &c.* And furnished them with capital to trade with during his absence, both that they might support and benefit themselves, and afford employment at interest for his money.

15. *Five talents.* The talent was a *weight* among the Jews, about equivalent to our cwt. It varied in value, then, according to the value of the material weighed. A Jewish talent of silver might be worth about £340, a talent of gold between £5000 and £6000. The Greek talent of silver was rather less, and the Roman more, than £200. If we are to regard the talent of the text as worth £340, it would be a sum of £1700 that was lent to the first servant. But the value is unim-

The use made of the talents.

17. And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

18. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21. His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

23. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou

The slothful servant.

hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine.

26. His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

27. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28. Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

29. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have

portant—the proportion is all with which the parable is concerned, the proportion of the grant and the use made of it. God gives to us in like manner, and reckons with us also thus. To some one talent would be too little for the power of use conferred on them; to others five talents would be too much. No one, however, has a right to waste his time and strength in burying his gift. He might employ his time at least as well in using it, as hiding it.

19. *After a long time.* This parable, then, also inculcates the duty of perseverance in *absence*, of *waiting* in duty. It is fully as difficult to go on doing right, when we are left without check or control a long time to ourselves, as to be ready for an early and unexpected account of what we have been commanded to do.

27. *Usury.* The old word for the payment made for the "*use*" of money. We now commonly call it "interest," and apply "usury," to extravagant interest, or that amount which it is undesirable, if not unjust, either to give or to receive—to give, because there can be rarely a return for the money adequate fairly and honourably to cover it; and to receive, because it is taking advantage of a person's necessities, running a risk ourselves or inducing him to do so, which no proper employment of our capital is likely to justify.

29. *For unto every one that hath, &c.* To him that goes on making a good use of his goods or his gifts, those goods and gifts shall be continually multiplying; to him that neglects, or makes bad use of them, they shall be continually diminishing. This is the reason why, in worldly matters, there are some persons that are always becoming richer and richer, and others poorer and poorer; and in spiritual matters, some more and more virtuous, and others less and less so. Neglected means and opportunities are the most ruinous of possessions. The provident are always gaining what the improvident are losing—the temperate gathering what the drunkard is scattering; and the religious man rising as much nearer to God, as the irreligious man is going away from him. It is as though it were taken from the one, and given to the other.

The sheep and the goats.

abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

31. ¶ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats.

33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye

The beneficent

gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred and fed *thee?* or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

38. When saw we thee a stranger and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?*

39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40. And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

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40. *Inasmuch as ye have done it, &c.* Christ is always judging us, and judging us mainly by our deeds, whether they be good or whether they be evil. Here is a great day and hour indicated, in which that judgment shall be pronounced. Sometimes our Lord pronounces, as it were, a daily judgment on us; sometimes it is long deferred; sometimes it seems to be deferred even to our departure from this and our entrance into another state of being. Whenever it is, whether rarely, or frequently, or only at last, it is equally real and inevitable. Here our Lord speaks especially of the approval with which he will visit deeds of charity and love, and the disapprobation with which he will punish hard-heartedness, selfishness, and neglect. This he does under the figure of a shepherd driving from his presence the goats, and keeping his sheep near him. The division is obviously rough and general, as it is when we speak of the bad and the good, among both of which classes there are various degrees, the highest of one coming closely upon the lowest of the other. But for a parable and comparison, the analogy is sufficiently correct: but it is not to be imagined for a moment that the omniscient God, who knows every circumstance of our lives, and who judgeth a perfectly righteous judgment, will divide all mankind into two classes only, one of whom will be eternally blessed, and the other eternally miserable; on the contrary, we may legitimately expect that with him who knoweth the heart and trieth the reins, the most discriminatory, exact, and considerate judgment will be pronounced upon each, according to his condition and efforts; and his punishment as well as his reward be in proportion too.

41. *Into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* A terrible denunciation of hardness of heart and neglect of the wants and the miseries of others. As the merely inattentive and negligent servant who was not watchful and ready at his Lord's call should not be admitted into the warm, the festal and illuminated house, but should be cast into outer darkness, into the darkness outside the house, and be sentenced to take his part in weeping and gnashing of teeth, in the disappointment and vexation of the excluded: so here, the cruel and unfeeling man, who has not a word of sympathy or a hand

And the selfish.

43. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

The gathering at the palace of Caiaphas.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,[a]

2. Ye know that after two days is *the feast of* the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

3. Then assembled together the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

4. And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*.

[a] Mark xiv, 1—72. Luke xxii, 1—62.

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of aid for his suffering brother, is sentenced to a still more dreadful fate, even the misery associated with the principle of evil, the king of the wicked, the prince of darkness and of wrong, and all his associates and companions. His is not the exclusion of a night from the feast, but of a life, or of ages upon ages, from the presence of the good Shepherd.

46. *Everlasting punishment—life eternal.* The word here variously rendered everlasting and eternal is the same, *aionios*, age-enduring, extending farther than we can realize. It is used in senses evidently qualified by the subjects to which it is applied. It is applied by Herodian (3, 26) to the secular games of the Romans, and in reference to their recurrence, after the lapse of an *age*, or period of three generations. In Jude, ver. 7, it is applied to the fire which burnt Sodom and Gomorrha; sometimes to the hills, Gen. xlix, 26; Habakkuk iii, 6. Those, therefore, who believe that the punishment of the sins of this life will in the future world be literally never-ending, i. e., will never cease, or effect an amendment in the souls of the sufferers, will interpret the "everlasting" of the text in its strongest sense. Those who think that the punishments of the future life are remedial, and will terminate with the evil in the sinner's heart, will give a modified meaning to the word everlasting as applied to punishment; while all will be agreed that it is to be taken in its strongest sense in its application to "life," in the nature and object of which is not necessarily involved the idea of cessation. The punishment of sin will be as lasting as the sin, and the happiness of goodness as lasting as goodness. Take away in the future world sin from the heart and he who had been a sinner will cease to suffer: take away goodness, and those who had been good will cease to rejoice.

CHAPTER XXVI.

2. *Passover.* Instituted in commemoration of the Lord's *passing over* unharmed the houses of the Israelites, when the first-born of the Egyptians perished; Exodus xii. It was celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Hebrew year, Nisan, which corresponded with the latter part of our March and the beginning of April. The Hebrew year began, as the natural year, with the early spring, about the time of the vernal equinox.

3. *At the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas.* The great council or Sanhedrim usually met within the precincts of the temple, first in a room called Gazith, or the *paved* chamber (just as our House of Lords used to meet in the *painted* chamber), and afterwards in apparently a more temporary building, called Chanoth, or the sheds (just, perhaps, as our House of Commons met in a temporary building after their former place of assembly had been burnt). The reason of these changes does not seem to have been preserved. On the occasion here referred to, they met at the Palace of Caiaphas. May we not find in this circumstance a singular and truthful coincidence? They met in their haste at night. The high priest was all day in his apartment at the temple: but at night was to be found in his own palace. If, therefore, they desired to bring any matter, for greater expedition or greater privacy, before him in the night-time, they would necessarily have to go to him in his own palace. Caiaphas's full name was Joseph Caiaphas. He was appointed high-priest by the Roman government, and remained so for ten years or more. He married a daughter of a previous high-priest, Annas, who is also called high-priest, and who may be supposed there-

Jesus in the house of Simon at Bethany.

5. But they said, Not on the feast *day* [*during the feast*], lest there be an uproar among the people.

6. ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

7. There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat [*lay*] *at meat.*

He is anointed by the woman.

8. But when his disciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose *is* this waste?[b]

9. For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

10. When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

[b] John xii, 3—8.

fore to have retained some of his former dignities and duties during his son-in-law's tenure of office. See John xviii, 13.

5. *Lest there be an uproar among the people.* They might not unnaturally fear, from the way in which Jesus had been received on his entry into Jerusalem a few days previously, that a rescue would have been attempted. But either from the disappointment of the people with Jesus on his arrest, or from the too frequent fickleness of the multitude, acted upon by every vague report or unfounded suspicion, or by means of the clamour of their retainers, crying "crucify him," from the crowd, their fears became groundless, and they were permitted to execute their victim without interruption from the people.

6. *Simon the leper*, to distinguish him from Simon the Peter, or rock. He had been a leper, but we may conclude, from his giving this entertainment, had ceased to be such, perhaps by the hands of Jesus' mercy.

7. *An alabaster box of very precious ointment.* The custom of using this fine hard white stone for preserving unguents and perfumes, caused all vessels employed for this purpose, even though made of gold, silver, glass, stone or wood, to be called *alabastra.* Their shape was usually that of our oil-flasks, having long and narrow necks. Alabaster is a carbonate of lime. The ointment here spoken of was spikenard, (Mark xiv, 3), which is still brought into Syria from India by the ancient overland route. The plant as it grows above the ground is in colour like an ear of green wheat. The root and side-leaves growing straight up out of it (like *spikes*, hence the name *spike*nard) are dried and form a fragrant drug, from which is also extracted the oil or attar (otto) such as that alluded to in the text. What made it so very costly was the quantity, of which the essence only would be preserved in the oil. It is said that 100,000 roses yield only 180 grains of otto.—*Sat* [*lay*] *at meat.* The expression "lying" at table is as common in the New Testament as the expression "sitting down to table," is with us. The rich would be supplied with couches for this purpose; perhaps the poor lay commonly on the floor or the ground. The painters of the Lord's supper have usually represented the party as sitting up; this was either in consequence of the ignorance of history and chronology which characterised the early painters, or because the posture of sitting affords them more opportunity of varying the figure and countenance.

9. *Might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.* It would appear from the corresponding passages in the other evangelists, that Jesus and his disciples had a bag in which was kept the money, and perhaps the food, which was given them. Out of this bag they relieved the necessities of those poorer than themselves. Judas kept it. He wished that the woman had given them the money which she had spent on the ointment, instead of the ointment itself. He mentions as his reason, that they might have more to give to the poor; but the disciples, interpreting his words by subsequent events, think that it was because he wished the money for themselves. The eastern people on their journies carried little bags or baskets with them, the more necessary in the infrequency of inns and places of public refreshment. Among us the poor and wandering, to whom public houses would be expensive, make the same use of their *wallets.* As our Lord and his Apostles were always wandering from place to place, they would take the usual precaution, and as they had no money, would depend on the bounty of friends for the supply of their bags. The bag, however, of Judas was more especially appropriated to money, as each Apostle would have his own bag or basket. It was this that occasioned their having twelve baskets, when they gathered up the fragments.

10. *A good work upon me.* We are ever able to be giving something to the poor; but there are seasons also when our hearts desire

He vindicates her from the charge of waste.

11. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

12. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial.

13. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

14. ¶ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

Judas covenants to betray him.

15. And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16. And from that time he sought [*a good*] opportunity to betray him.

17. ¶ Now the first *day* of the *feast of* unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

18. And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, the

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to pour themselves out in some mark of affection and regard to those we love. There is a difference between alms and presents; duty or compassion prompt to the first, affection or gratitude to the latter. The one should be done, but the other need not be left undone. The woman gave way to her feelings, and offered, in perhaps poverty of speech, the most precious thing she had, as an expression of them. When the object of the reverence was Jesus, it is obvious that the occasion could rarely present itself; and our Lord adds another consideration—his life was near its end, and the anointing seemed to him a symbol of the embalming that would follow his death. The justification, then, of the woman was complete. She did it from profound feeling—she did it to one who could "not be always with them,"—she did it to one who was soon to die.

14. *Then one of the twelve.* Connect this with verse 5, and regard the intervening verses as episodical—having a relation, however, to what follows, not only in point of time, but as throwing light on the character of Judas and his motives.

15. *What will ye give me.* All his better feelings were overcome by his love of money. Whatever a man loves supremely, to this he will sacrifice every thing else. If he loves God, and Truth, and Man *supremely*, he will sacrifice every thing else to them. If he love his country or his family supremely, he will sacrifice every thing else to these. If he love fame or glory supremely, he will sacrifice every thing else to it: and if he love money *supremely*, he will sacrifice character, family, country, man, truth, and God to this. Such was the love of this wretched man, and such his fall. He fixed upon one of the mere instruments of life as an end of life; thus making his life one of the basest of things, and himself one of the basest of beings. So is every one that placeth his trust in riches, and prefers accumulating money to cultivating affection, integrity, charity and usefulness. *Thirty pieces.* The piece or shekel being about the weight of our half-crown.

16. *Betray him.* Where trust is reposed in a person, he is bound by especial obligations. Treachery, therefore, has always been esteemed a greater crime than cruelty or violence; because it is a crime, where there had appeared to be and ought to have been a virtue. Some natures will avoid these great sins, which will fall into smaller ones. It is said that a man who might have betrayed Charles II in his escape, and have received the large reward set upon his head, was afterwards whipped for dog-stealing. He rose superior to the baser, but was ensnared by the lesser crime. Men who have their whole natures roused and ready armed against a great temptation, will sometimes yield to a small one. We have need to remember our Lord's counsel to Peter, "Watch and pray." Peter stood by our Lord when he was first attacked, and afterwards died for him; but was in the interim frightened into a lie by the question of a southern girl, remarking on his accent.

17. *The first day of the feast of unleavened bread.* Thursday. It was an expressive sign of the haste with which the Israelites left Egypt, that they are said to have taken "their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders;" and that on the first opportunity after their departure they "baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual." Exod. xii. In imitation and commemoration of this, the first thing they did in after times

Jesus keeps the passover with his disciples.

Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20. Now when the even was come, he sat down [*lay down to meat*] with the twelve.

21. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.[c]

22. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

23. And he answered and said, He

The betrayer exposed.

that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

26. ¶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27. And he took the cup, and gave

c John xiii, 18—30.

was, on the approach of the Passover, to remove all leaven from the house. The feast lasted seven or eight days.

18. *I will keep the passover at thy house.* A certain acquaintance was here most probably pointed out. But accommodation of this kind in Jerusalem was open to every one at the passover. Apartments were prepared and furnished for the purpose of keeping the feast; but no hire was asked. No one could say, "I have not found a fire to roast the passover lamb in Jerusalem, or a bed to lie on."

19. *They made ready the passover.* Towards evening each family or company slew a perfect male lamb of the first year. (Exod. xii, 5) This was roasted and eaten in the night. The direction in Exodus was, that it should be eaten by the parties standing, with loins girded, staff in hand and shoes on the feet, as ready for a journey, (Exod. xii, 11). A child was then to ask the reason of these observances, and the head of the family or company was to give an explanation of them. A cup of wine was then blessed and partaken of, and some unleavened bread broken, blessed, and eaten. In the course of the general meal (of which bitter herbs formed a part) some of the Psalms from the cxii to cxviii were sung. It is in compliance with this custom, probably, that Jesus and the Apostles, verse 30, "sung a hymn."

23. *He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish.* This exposed to suspicion more than one, but less than all; for there would be several little dishes of the mixture of bitter herbs on the table, into which the guests were to dip their bread. Judas, therefore, was near Christ, and, with one or two others, dipped into the same dish.

24. *It had been good for that man if he had not been born.* If this can be literally true of any human being, surely that being must be Judas. What man, since the Creation, stands out in so wretched and iniquitous a distinction, as the man who gave Jesus Christ up to death for money? But even over his evil, the love of Jesus must eventually be triumphant, and the dreadful sin be washed out. Some suppose that all such hope is precluded by the words of this verse. But there is no greater mistake in reading the Scriptures than to disallow the use of strong and impassioned expressions, and to interpret every such, when met with, not as used to shew the strength of the feelings connected with the use of them, but as if they were selected with a view to the most accurate description of the literal fact.

26. *This is my body, &c.* What a still pathos there is in this transition. No rebuke, no indignation; but simply the assumption of the fact, and the presentation to the minds of his disciples of that body, which he has just told them, one of them was about to deliver unto death! This is my body—which I have told you, one of you is going to cause to be killed. As I break this bread, my betrayed body is going to be broken. As I pour out this wine, my betrayed blood is about to be spilled. The words referred obviously to the action, not to the substance. It was not the hard unleavened bread that was Jesus' body, but that bread *broken*, which indicated the fate of Jesus' body. Such metaphors were usual in the age and country. "This

Christ institutes the remembrance supper.

thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28. For this is my blood of the new testament [*covenant*] which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into [*upon*] the mount of Olives.

31. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me [*shall find in me an occasion to fall*] this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

The disciples will all deny him.

32. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

33. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee [*shall find in thee an occasion to fall*], *yet* will I never be offended [*find in thee an occasion to fall*].[d]

d John xiii, 36—38.

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is Jerusalem," says the Prophet Ezekiel, speaking of his own *hair* (Ezek. v, 1—5); by which he did not mean that the hair of his head and beard was Jerusalem, but as that hair was burnt and scattered, so Jerusalem should be destroyed, and her inhabitants dispersed. This direct form means no more than when Jeremiah (xix, 10, 11) says in the name of the Lord, after breaking a bottle, "Even so will I break this people, and this city." It would have meant no more had he held the bottle in his hand and as he broke it had said "This is Jerusalem." "So," our Lord says, while breaking the hard biscuit-bread used at the feast, "So will my body be broken;" and in taking the wine, "so will my blood be poured out." It is difficult to realize the grounds on which so great a portion of Christendom regard our Lord as literally saying that the bread which he held in his own hand was his own body, the wine he drank literally the blood which flowed in his own veins. But perhaps it is still more inconceivable that any body of men should suppose that, every day among ourselves, this very body and blood can be reproduced by pronouncing a blessing over a little bread and wine, and that these are really and in truth the very body and blood which suffered on the cross. Surely the most literal reception of the words of this verse cannot be made to involve the second, at least, of these suppositions.

28. *This is my blood of the new testament* [*covenant*]. The Jewish sacrificial observances furnished a large amount of language, in which to clothe the more spiritual ideas of the New Testament. As the blood of the paschal-lamb struck upon the door-posts of the Israelites in Egypt was the token of their being passed over in the sorrows which awaited others; so, now that our Lord is reminded that his own blood is about to be shed, he says that they on whose souls it is in like manner shed, shall in like manner be saved from those spiritual evils which will afflict others. When he is lifted up, he will draw men unto him: by his death, others shall be introduced into life—by his sufferings, into consolation. Jesus, by that death which followed his life of obedience on earth, and preceded his life of glory in heaven, sealed the new covenant, by which God again bound man, as it were, to a larger righteousness, and himself to the bestowal of higher hopes. The words are to be interpreted in the same spirit as those of the institution. A determination to be very literal in interpreting eastern language often precisely ensures our missing the meaning, as it would do in the same countries now.

29. *When I drink it new with you, &c.* That is to say, we shall never more meet in life on earth. The next time we drink of the fruit of the vine together, it will be in a new form, at a new and spiritual feast, in a new and spiritual kingdom.

31. *Shall be offended because of me.* This expression presents one of those difficulties which will be always occurring in efforts to translate from one language into another, owing to the changes which are perpetually taking place in the received meaning of words—so that what is a correct rendering, according to common language, in one age ceases to be so in a later age. "Shall be scandalized in me," is the original Greek expression, to which our translation "shall be offended" once exactly corresponded, both words conveying the idea of an object or a person against which a man fell or struck, and which therefore became an occasion of his fall, or a stumbling-block in his way. A "scandal,"

Peter's promise and Christ's warning.

34. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow [*sound*] thou shalt deny me thrice.

35. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

36. ¶ Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.[e]

37. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

The agony in Gethsemane.

38. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

40. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing but the flesh *is* weak.

e John xviii, 1—27.

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means in Greek, a thing in our way, and against which we strike in walking or moving, and to this originally corresponded the English word "offence," derived from the Latin "*offendere*" to strike against. In our present use of these words, however, we mean by "scandal" an unfavourable report, or a disgraceful occurrence, and by "offence," an affront or injury. Our Lord did not mean that his disciple would be scandalized by him, or affronted at him, but that the disciple should find in his Master a test of his principle, which he should not be equal to, and an occasion therefore of a moral delinquency or fall. The expression met with in an earlier part of this Gospel (v. 30), "if thine eye offend thee," bears the same signification, "be a scandal, or an offence, a thing which is in your way and makes you stumble, or is an occasion of your falling," &c. Both words are brought together in Rom. ix, 33, where it is written of Christ, "I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence"—literally, "a stone of stumbling against, and a rock (or stone) of scandal."

34. *Before the cock crow* [*sound*]. There are unconquerable objections to the ordinary reception of these words—not simply on the usually-adduced grounds that cocks were forbidden in Jerusalem, but from the utter precariousness of the signal. What fixed time could possibly be denoted by such a signal? And yet we are told that immediately after Peter's denial "the cock crew," as though there was one time in the early morning at which all these birds would crow, and before which none of them would crow, or else that there was one particular bird denoted, and that Peter's denial would take place before that bird crowed. There can be little doubt that the explanation given by the late T. Fyshe Palmer, the Scottish political martyr, in the Theological Repository (vol. vi, p. 105), is the true one; namely, that the "cock-crow" here means the sound of the trumpet at the conclusion of the early Roman watch, called the "cock-crow," from its imitation of the sound of that animal. There was a strong guard of Roman troops kept in the castle of Antonia, which overlooked the temple, and where the ordinary usages of a Roman military station were doubtless observed.

36. *Gethsemane.* A village so called apparently from the oil-press or presses which stood or had once stood there, and situated at the foot of the Mount of Olives. There was the little garden into which our Saviour retired, hence called "the garden of Gethsemane." This is the spot to which St. John alludes when he says that Jesus "went forth with his disciples over the brook Kedron, where was a garden, into which he entered, and his disciples." Perhaps, therefore, it may be concluded from the two passages that Jesus left the body of his disciples in the village of the press, and went himself "yonder," into the garden near it, taking with him his three favourite disciples, Peter, James and John.

40. *Findeth them asleep.* St. Luke says, with great beauty and nature, that when Jesus "rose from prayer" and went to his disciples, "he found them sleeping for sorrow." No interpretation is wanted by any feeling heart of the details of incident or expression in this solemn and affecting passage in the Gospels. It reveals our Lord in the agony

The approach of Judas.

42. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

47. ¶ And while he yet spake [*was speaking*], lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude

Jesus is taken.

with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast [*lay hold of him*].

49. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him.

50. And Jesus said unto him, Friend [*companion*], wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

51. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

52. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his [*its*] place: for all they that take the

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of human suffering, craving the silent society and support of his disciples, so that he might feel them near him, even though his communion was now with another. The disciples, weary and troubled at the close of the long and agitating day, are "sleeping for sorrow." Jesus, knowing his fate to be so near, and that he should "sleep no more," is praying either to be spared the coming trial, or to receive strength to bear it. The whole history of resigned sorrow, the privileges of grief, and the sources of strength, is here told with an universal and eternal truth.

46. *Rise, let us be going*—not away from them, but to meet them. He awakens his disciples, who are lying on the ground asleep; tells them to rise, and go forth at once with him to meet those who are coming to arrest him. Henceforth there are no signs of the spiritual conflict through which our Lord had passed; his weakness is perfected in the Almighty's strength. We are not, therefore, to be discouraged that we have to contend with evil and weakness, but must strive to be, like Jesus, conquerors in the struggle. We are never overcome by evil while we are resisting it, but in the way at least to overcoming evil by good.

51. *One of them which were with Jesus.* It is remarkable that neither Matthew, nor Mark, nor Luke, mention who it was that commenced this resistance to the authorities, and it is not until we come to John's gospel that we learn that it was Peter. Does not this form one indication in a list, that if complete would probably be found very long, that the main constituent portions at least of the first three gospels were written before the gospel of John, and that Peter's name was not mentioned till he was out of the reach of all earthly harm? Perhaps the fact of Peter having struck the servant might, when he found Jesus was apprehended, add to his terror, and help to induce him to deny his knowledge of Jesus, not so much lest he should be involved in Jesus' fate, as lest he should be identified as the resister of the arrest. It must have been an intense love of Jesus alone that could have induced him to undergo the risk of following him to see the issue of his trial; and it was probably personal fear of being identified as the wounder of Malchus, that made him (as Jesus had warned him that he would do) deny his companionship with his Lord.

52. *They that take the sword, &c.* The most destructive are usually the most exposed to destruction: those persons who are the most fond of strife are oftenest in trouble; and those nations who are most given to war, are most exposed to its horrors and destructiveness. The statement is one of those truisms which the wisdom of God is for ever, though with slow success, impressing on the folly of men. War is robbery,

sword, shall [*will*] perish with the sword.

53. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54. But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

55. In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

57. ¶ And they that had laid hold on Jesus, led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58. But Peter followed him afar off, unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

59. Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death,

60. But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, *yet* found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

61. And said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

62. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

63. But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

64. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

65. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blas-

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violence and murder, on a large scale. Christians in their imperfect apprehension of their Master's religion may still practise it; but it is impossible to conceive of its continuance under a full reception and acknowledgment of the religion of the Prince of Peace. Every sincere follower of Jesus, therefore, who sees this, will be anxious to do every thing in his power to put a "speedy end to its horrors and calamities." All social changes are wrought by the providence of God through the convictions of men; and the more profoundly the conviction of the folly, waste, wickedness and wrong of war, as a means of settling questions of international right, can be impressed upon our fellow creatures, of our own and of every other country, the nearer we shall certainly be to this desirable end.

53. *Thinkest thou that I cannot, &c.* Do you not think, that if it were to the purpose of my heavenly Father, or my own desire, an overwhelming force of celestial aid would be at my command? But how then should the expectation of the Scriptures, of a suffering Messiah, and a heavenly and spiritual kingdom, be fulfilled?

61. *I am able to destroy the Temple of God, &c.* This accusation was probably founded on some such observation as that which is recorded as having fallen from Jesus, when (John ii, 19) he said "Destroy this temple" (meaning his body) "and in three days I will raise it up." The expression applied to the human frame seems forced to us, but does not appear to have been so alien to the spirit of the Jewish mind and language, if we remember that St. Paul speaks to the Corinthians of the body, as the "tabernacle"—and "the earthly house of the tabernacle" (II Cor. v, 1, 4), and also as "the temple of the Holy Spirit," (1 Cor. vi, 19).

64. *Thou hast said.* Thus our Lord, so subdued but an hour before by the prospect of the coming terror, but strengthened by communion with the heavenly source of all his power and wisdom, pleads guilty on this public occasion to the full extent of the charge, which he knew involved his life, and for the first time openly declares that he was the Messiah—the Christ, the Son of God.

65. *Rent his clothes.* A public, and, as it was intended to be, an impressive sign of

He is found guilty of death.

phemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold now ye have heard his blasphemy.

66. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

67. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands,

68. Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

69. ¶ Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70. But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71. And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and

Peter's denial.

said unto them that were there, this *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

73. And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth [*discovereth*] thee.

74. Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew [*sounded*].

75. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow [*sound*], thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

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horror and grief. But these men would have done well to remember the Prophet Joel's exhortation, "Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God." Although indulged in as a mark of grief, as in Gen. xxvii, 29, where Reuben rends his clothes when he finds Joseph is lost from the pit, and verse 34, when Jacob supposes that Joseph is dead; and II Kings xviii, 37, where Eliakim and Shebna and Joah appear before Hezekiah with their clothes rent, on account of the blasphemy of Rab-shakeh: yet it appears by the law to have been expressly forbidden the high priest. See Levit. xxi, 10—perhaps partly to avoid any resemblance in this respect to heathen practices, and partly to shew the sanctity of every thing about the High Priest of God, even his very raiment.

66. *He is guilty of death.* Was this the unanimous verdict, or that only of a large majority of the Sanhedrim? Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, and Joseph of Arimathea, who buried him, were members of the Jewish Parliament, which condemned Jesus to death. But as the council was summoned hastily, in the middle of the night, and as Nicodemus was not likely to be among those specially sent for (since he was known to be hostile to the proceedings against Jesus), we may suppose, or at least hope, that they were neither of them present at this meeting. They publicly expressed what regret they could at the fatal result: for one came and asked for his body to bury, and the other supplied a hundred-weight of myrrh and aloes for embalming it. John xix, 38, 39. From St. John, we learn that Nicodemus had made a faint attempt to save Jesus at an earlier stage of the proceedings against him, when he asked, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" But his remonstrance was put down by the taunt "art thou also of Galilee?"

70. *I know not what thou sayest.* Or as it would be expressed among us, "I do not know what you are talking about"—"I know nothing of the matter."

73. *Thy speech bewrayeth* [*discovereth*] *thee.* Just as a person speaking broadly a dialect of Yorkshire or Somersetshire would be detected as not being a Londoner, by any person employed about one of the royal palaces or courts of justice. It appears that the Galilean dialect was a source of amusement at Jerusalem from the mistakes which the indistinct pronunciation of some letters in it occasioned. Thus, a story is told of a Galilean, who asked whose is this *immar* or lamb? But from the indistinct manner in which he pronounced the first vowel sound, it was doubtful, whether he meant, a lamb or an ass—wool or wine.

74. *Began he to curse and to swear.* As the suspicion spreads, his terror increases, and his denial waxes warmer. He begins at length either to swear at those who continued the charge, or to imprecate curses upon himself, if he had any thing to do with Jesus. Out of what weakness, under the action of a true repentance and an earnest and religious resolve, may come what strength! This very man afterwards confessed Jesus to his own

CHAPTER XXVII

WHEN the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:[a]

2. And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him [*up*] to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3. ¶ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,[b]

4. Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? See thou *to that.*

5. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6. And the chief priests took the

a Mark xv, 1—47. Luke xxiii, 1—56. John xviii, 28; xix, 42.

b Acts i, 16—19.

destruction; and even, the church tradition says, would not, when he came to be crucified, be crucified in the usual manner, but with his head downwards, because he was not worthy to die in the same posture as his Lord.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. *To put him to death.* At the midnight meeting of the council they had only found him guilty of death, that is, of a capital crime (chap. xxvi, 66). At the present, or morning meeting, they sought the means of putting their sentence into execution. To do this (since the Jews no longer retained the power of life and death in their hands) it was necessary to take Jesus before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

2. *Pontius Pilate.* He was governor of Judæa twelve years, from A.D. 26 to A.D. 38. It is evident from this chapter, that he was anxious to save Jesus from the fury of the Jews; and his whole career, as procurator of the province, indicates a high scorn of what he considered Jewish prejudices of all kinds. He was the first Roman ruler who had the military ensigns of his army (on which were images of the emperor intended to be worshiped) carried into the holy city; and it was only on a deputation of Jews to him at Cæsarea, who declared that they would die rather than submit to it, that he withdrew them. It is to be feared that he took the part of Jesus in this trial more out of hatred and opposition to the Jews and their bigotry, than from a love of truth and justice. He was, in consequence of an act of cruelty to the Samaritans, summoned to Rome; and Eusebius says, on the authority of some Roman histories no longer extant, that he was banished to Vienne in Gaul, and there destroyed himself.

3. *Repented himself.* What the exact motives and purposes of Judas in his discovery of Jesus to his enemies were, it is impossible now to say with certainty. Some believe that he did it with a good, but weak purpose—to expedite Christ's declaration of himself, and force him to bring on his kingdom. It is more likely that he was swayed by a low-minded avarice, which we know has often led to the basest crimes, and that he was induced by his love of money to promise to point out Jesus, in some of his hours of retirement, to his enemies, without realizing the fatal results. When he found, within a few hours from that act, that Jesus was on his way to crucifixion, his natural and better feelings returned, but alas! too late: the treacherous crime, for which his name is execrated by each succeeding age, was already irrevocably committed. If it be necessary to a virtuous and happy life that the love of *God* should be our supreme desire, what a descent from this result must take place, and how contrary must be all the effects, when the supreme desire of a man, that to whose gratification he makes every thing else yield, is the love of *money.* This extreme and shocking instance should put all, especially in an industrious and wealthy country, on their guard against making gold their God, or being careless of the way in which money is earned.

4. *What is that to us?* Wicked people always ridicule and despise those who have been weak enough to be their tools. To associate with—to work with and for—bad men, is to treasure up for ourselves misery, for which they will offer us no alleviation. The good will sympathise with all our sorrows, and lead us into none.

5. *Went and hanged himself.* In Acts i, 18, it is said of Judas, "Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." These two accounts are evidently different. In one, Judas is said to have hanged himself—in the other, to have fallen down and burst asunder.

The potter's field bought for a burying place for strangers.

silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury [*Corbanan, or temple-treasury*], because it is the price of blood.

7. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

8. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

9. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

10. And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

11. And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the

These two statements, however, would be reconciled by the very possible supposition, that Judas, in endeavouring to hang himself, had fallen down, and burst his stomach. But one of these accounts mentions the transaction, whatever was its exact form, as having taken place before any field was purchased, and after the money had been given back to the priests; the other mentions it as having taken place later, when Judas had purchased the field, and as having taken place in it. In reference to the main matter of the repentance and suicide of Judas, the discrepancy is unimportant. The existence of the two accounts shews that there has been no attempt at collusion or forced agreement. We may suppose the account in the Acts to have been the earlier and more authentic; that in the present Gospel to have been later or more traditional. The verses which contain both accounts seem to be parenthetical, and inserted in the narratives by way of explanation, by the writers or by some subsequent copyist. The immediately going to the priests, and throwing down the money in the temple, has more of a pictorial aspect about it, as if belonging to a later form of the same account, when the imagination of the times had been exercised on the simpler form of it in the Acts. "The Orientals have never been much addicted to suicide; nor does it appear that the Jews were so in the times of the Old Testament." But "we learn from Josephus, that suicide was, in later times, among the Jews frequently resorted to by miserable and despairing men; and among the forms in which this awful relief was sought, hanging is mentioned as having been particularly common." Perhaps the Jews "had learnt this melancholy and criminal practice from the Greeks and Romans, among whom it was notoriously common."

8. *Field of blood.* Or, in the language spoken by themselves, *Aceldama.*

9. *Jeremy the Prophet.* The only words like those here quoted to be found in the prophecies of Jeremiah, as we now have them, are in Jer. xxxii, 9, where Jeremiah, in token of his firm faith that they would return from captivity to Jerusalem, purchases some land, and has all the usual legal formalities strictly observed. "And I bought the field of Hanameel, my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver," &c. The passage evidently alluded to occurs in Zechariah (Zech. xi, 12, 13), where the value which the Jewish people appeared to attach to Jehovah or his prophet is symbolically described: "So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." The words occurred to the writer as illustrative of the subject of Judas—in which way the Jewish writers quoted their own national literature, as all other writers do theirs; but the words quoted are not in any way to be taken as prophetic of the treachery of Judas, or as having had originally any reference to it. Some writers account for the appearance of the name of Jeremiah in the text by saying, that under that name all the prophets were often spoken of. Others regard it as inserted in some early copy of St. Matthew by mistake for Zechariah: or added by some commentating-copyist to the original word, which was simply "prophet." The truth is, too much anxiety has been evinced to obtain a precise reconcilement of all these little discrepancies, which are sure in early times to have arisen, or in later times to have occurred, in the necessary lot of written documents of the kind, and their presence shews the honesty of those who had to do with them, and is a proof in favour of, not against, the substantial truthfulness and accuracy of the narratives.

11. *Art thou the king of the Jews?* Pilate only wishes to take cognizance of the supposed political offence, and asks, therefore,

Pilate's offer to release a prisoner.

Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

12. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

13. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

14. And he answered him to never a word [*answered (him) not to any one thing that was said*]; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

15. Now at *that* feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

16. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

17. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ?

18. For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

19. ¶ When he was set down [*while he was sitting*] on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying,

The multitude demand the death of Jesus.

Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

20. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

21. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

22. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

23. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

24. ¶ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

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whether the charge is true—that he set himself up for king. Jesus does not explicitly deny or explicitly assent to the charge; because, though it was true in one sense, it was not true in Pilate's sense. Pilate seeing that, if he claimed to be king at all, it was only in a spiritual sense, is desirous of setting him at liberty at once. See the conversation between them as reported by John, ch. xviii, 33—37.

15. *Was wont to release, &c.* On accessions, births of royal heirs, attainment of majorities, and other occasions of public rejoicing, it has long been usual for the public authority to pass acts of amnesty, or to empty the prisons of many of their occupants. In despotic countries, where imprisonments for political offences are frequent, this becomes a matter of necessity; and the political enemies of the deceased sovereign are often liberated, but to make room for those who may prove themselves hostile to the reigning power. Whether the special custom here alluded to was introduced by the Romans among the Jews, or had its origin among themselves, is not positively known; but Pilate's words, "Ye have a custom," the selection of the passover as the occasion for exercising it, and its accordance with the Mosaic laws of limited service and of jubilee, all seem to point to it as a national custom of their own.

16. *Barabbas.* "And there was one named Barabbas which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection:" Mark xv, 7. The insurrection had been probably a popular one, and the chief priests made use of the fact to turn the attention of the people to an old favorite. It is impossible to suppose that they fixed upon the most odious and detestable of the prisoners to be a rival to Jesus for the suffrages of the crowd. The act of violence was perpetrated in an insurrection, and does not appear, therefore, to have been a common murder for the common purposes of such crimes, but possibly in some cause not wholly unpopular among the people.

24. *And washed his hands before the multitude.* A symbolical act, in some instances prescribed to the Jews. Deut. xxi, 1—7, "If one be found slain in the land which the Lord

Barabbas released.

25. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

26. ¶ Then released he Barabbas, unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

Jesus delivered up and scourged.

27. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band *of soldiers*.

28. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe [*cloak*].

thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him"—"all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it." Every one who knows how weak the human voice is in a large excited concourse of people, will perceive also how much more easily Pilate could convey his sense of the injustice of the present demand, and his desire not to participate in it, by a visible action of this kind, than by any attempt at being heard by the multitude before him.

25. *His blood be on us and on our children.* It is awful at all times to observe the pitch of blind fury to which an ignorant crowd may be raised by those who choose to practise on their passions. They will then listen to nothing; they must relieve themselves by some act of violence. If Jesus had not been given up to this enraged crowd, they would not improbably have torn him to pieces; so madly wrought upon their feelings some lying misrepresentations of Jesus, which the priests had cunningly caused to be circulated among them. Here there is something especially awful in the imprecation which they call down upon themselves: so confident in their headlong rashness are they, that they stand secure, though the chasm of a long and appalling future is just opening before them. The whole nation of the Jews, indeed, including the innocent and loving disciples in Galilee and their posterity, were not sentenced to the punishment of long ages, on account of the furious and ungoverned conduct of the ringleaders of this ignorant crowd in Jerusalem; but the same perverseness and determination to look to a material instead of a moral rescue of their nation—a delivery from the power of Rome, instead of from the power of sin and ignorance, which angered them here, and made them prefer Barabbas, who headed an insurrection, to Jesus, who offered them a spiritual freedom—brought on, within half a century, the utter ruin of their state, and the dispersion of their nation.

26. *When he had scourged Jesus.* A punishment commonly inflicted by the Romans in capital cases, before execution. Thus Livy speaks of a conspiracy of slaves, in which many were slain, many taken, while the heads of the conspiracy were scourged and then crucified. This was done, probably, with a view of increasing the amount of actual bodily suffering, so that the punishment might not be a simple loss of life.

27. *Then the soldiers, &c.* They removed him from the tribunal, which was outside the Prætorium, and took him into the building, and there gathered round him in a mocking crowd. Nothing more surprises the refined sentiments of modern civilized ages, than the perpetual notices that are encountered of the barbarous and ferocious enjoyment which the men of an earlier age, even when high in rank, took in witnessing and augmenting the bodily sufferings and mental anguish of their victims. Such narratives (to be met with in Homer and the early history of the English and most other nations) seem to bring us close on the confines of savage life. The soldiers here were actuated by this spirit, rejoicing to witness the sufferings and add, as they supposed, to the mortification and pain of Jesus. All this conduct might not be regarded or intended as any thing worse than the ordinary mode of expressing a very common ferocity. But when we consider who and what he was to whom it was done—the holiest being that ever trod the earth, come in a spirit of divine love and mercy to preach glad tidings to mankind, to save them from their sins, to alleviate their every sorrow, and to declare to them the blessed hope of a life to come—we cannot contemplate this series of actions towards him, the betraying, the denying, the scourging, the mocking, and the crucifying of him, without the utmost horror and distress. There is but one consideration which can relieve the detestation with which we regard so shocking a series of crimes and wrongs against the holy one and the just, and that Jesus himself supplies in his own compassionating and merciful prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

28. *Put on him a scarlet robe* [*cloak*]. One of their own military cloaks, or perhaps an old one of one of the superior officers. The cloak was to represent a royal robe, the crown

He is mocked and insulted.

29. ¶ And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews!

30. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

32. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

He is crucified.

33. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

34. ¶ They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.

35. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

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of thorns a royal diadem, the reed a royal sceptre, the bowing of the knee the homage paid to monarchs. When the poor creatures who took part in this amusement became aware of whom they were reviling, how they must have shrunk away, in tears and shame, from the remembrance of their impious levity

31. *To crucify him.* The usual form of this punishment was to lay the criminal's body on a piece of timber standing up out of the earth, and stretch out his arms on a transverse beam near the top, nailing the hands to the wood, and tying the legs near the feet with thongs and cords, and leaving the sufferer to die of hunger, pain or exhaustion, or all these united, and sometimes to become food for birds of prey.

32. *They found a man of Cyrene, Simon, &c.* Cyrene was situated in that part of Africa called Libya—between which city and Jerusalem there was considerable intercourse, many Jews living at Cyrene, and many of such Cyrenian Jews visiting or coming to reside in Jerusalem. In Acts ii, 10, it is said, that among the people who heard the Apostles' preaching on the day of Pentecost, were dwellers "in the parts of Libya about Cyrene." They appear also to have had a synagogue in Jerusalem, Acts vi, 9. "Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines and Cyrenians," &c. It was an addition to the punishment of the person about to be crucified, that he had to bear his own cross. This Jesus appears to have done till he sunk down exhausted with the fatigue, when the soldiers meeting Simon of Cyrene, made him bear it—probably out of ill-nature and ridicule against him as a disciple or favourer of Jesus. It appears certain that his sons, at least, were disciples from the manner in which they are mentioned as known persons, in Mark xv, 21. "And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, *the father of Alexander and Rufus*, to bear his cross." St. Paul makes most honourable mention of a Rufus and his mother (Rom. xvi, 13). "Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." A person or persons of the name of Alexander, we find also spoken of (Acts xix, 33, and II Tim. iv, 14), but whether either or both be the same as Alexander, the son of Simon, we cannot determine.

33. *Golgotha.* The Hebrew, Kranion the Greek, and Calvarium or Calvary, the Latin word for the English skull, or the place of a skull—so called, some suppose, from the *shape* of the hillock, others from its being a place for the execution of criminals, whose *remains* were thus often found about it.

34. *Vinegar to drink mingled with gall.* The first deviation from the cruelty and insolence which had been adopted towards our Lord. This was an act of kindness. The draught was offered him, according to usage in such cases, to stupify his senses and deaden the pain. But our Lord desired to drink the cup which his Father had given him, and to endure unto the last, in full consciousness of what he was undergoing. Mark speaks of the draught as "wine mingled with myrrh." It would appear therefore to have been a sour common wine mingled with some bitter.

35. *Parted his garments.* His clothes were taken off the criminal before his crucifixion, and, according to the custom of our own country, became the property of the executioners. In the division, they would share the clothes among them, probably by mutual agreement. But when they came to the seamless coat (John xix, 23), an article of value, the

Taunts uttered against him.

36. And sitting down they watched him there;

37. And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

39. ¶ And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

40. And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41. Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

42. He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

The darkness, and the cry of Jesus.

43. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

45. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47. Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.

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gift, perhaps, of some reverential love to that blessed being, they cast lots for it, whose it should be. The words quoted are from Psalm xxii, 18: "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

38. *There were two thieves crucified with him.* Though the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus were sudden, these robbers had been awaiting their execution in the ordinary course of justice, according to which executions were arranged to take place on public festivals, that a greater number of people might be impressed with terror at the punishment. In accordance with this idea, capital punishments, when more common among ourselves, used commonly to be inflicted on market days at the assize town. Of whatever service such spectacles may have been in past time, they have rarely now any other than a brutalizing and depraving effect on the population who assemble to witness them, under the stimulus of a coarse and unfeeling curiosity.

40. *Thou that destroyest the temple, &c.* Making use of one of the charges urged against him in his trial, founded on a misapprehension of the language he had employed, Matt. xxvi, 61.

44. *The thieves also.* Luke excepts one of them from this infamy: xxiii, 40.

45. *From the sixth hour there was darkness, &c.* From twelve o'clock till three. During this time all was still. The revilers had wearied of their cruelty and insolence, and Jesus lay in his stillness and suffering awaiting his death: his poor disciples all gone away in terror: the soldiers sitting in guard near the cross: the hopes excited by his works of wonder and wisdom and love all defeated: the Messiahship at an end; and the Messiah overwhelmed by human law, and suffering as a malefactor. Darkness indeed reigned over all the land those weary melancholy hours. The voice of the sufferer interrupted the silence, but in language only calculated to deepen the gloom. The people around act as before; some offering an alleviation to his sufferings, and others stirred up by the sounds of his agony to renew their bitter blasphemy. Then Jesus died: the old dispensation was completed, the covenant of religion was opened to the whole human race; the veil that concealed the holy of holies was rent in twain from top to bottom; the earth was stirred from its foundations, and the spirits of the departed were endowed with life.

46. *Jesus cried with a loud voice.* In the words of the 22d Psalm, beginning, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me?" &c. This corresponds in feeling with the prayer of Gethsemane; and both indicate intense suffering and mental prostration. We have not a high-priest that cannot be touched by the feeling of our infirmities. It was through this suffering that Jesus was made perfect; it was over this suffering and these temptations to doubt for a moment the continued presence of God with his soul, in the hours of that soul's darkness, that he triumphed. As

Jesus dies.

48. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50. ¶ Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost [*the spirit*].

51. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks [*were*] rent;

52. And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept [*were asleep*] arose.

53. And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

54. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those [*the*] things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

Joseph of Arimathea asks his body.

55. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:

56. Among which [*whom*] was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

57. When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:

58. He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

59. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

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in the first case, his earlier petition is crowned with the prayer, "nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt;" so in the second, the expostulation of his agony is crowned by the declaration of his trust, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii, 46). These hours of despondence and sorrow in his Lord are very precious to the soul of every afflicted believer. They form part of that cup of human life which Christ came to drink for us and with us, and which, like him, we should strive to drink, first, with filial submission, and then with triumphant faith in divine love.

48. *Took a sponge.* In which they could more easily convey moisture to his lips, and allay the intolerable thirst which arose from the burning and inflammation of his wounds.

49. *Whether Elias will come.* The soldiers, being Romans, did not understand the language which Jesus used, or they or others chose to misunderstand the words, and pretend that he called for Elias. The rumour may have reached them that John the Baptist passed as his fore-runner and pioneer, under this name, and they may have wished to remind him, by this bitter taunt, of the similar fate of his prized associate and friend.

51. *The earth did quake.* Any agitation of the ground, like an earthquake, would account for most of the other effects. The dust and disturbance would create a darkness in the air (which could not have been occasioned by an eclipse of the sun, as the moon was at its full), the temple might be shaken by it, and the veil torn, and the graves also disturbed and expose the bodies of the dead. The agitated feelings of the people, and especially of the followers of Jesus, would account for all the other impressions accompanying the event.

55. *Ministering unto him.* Explained by Luke viii, 2 and 3. "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others which ministered unto him of their substance."

56. *Mary the mother of James and Joses,* and wife of Cleopas or Alpheus, and sister of our Lord's mother.—*Zebedee's children,* James and John.

57. *Arimathea.* The later form of the name of the village of Ramah in Benjamin; now placed about thirty miles from Jerusalem, and identified with the modern Ramlah.

58. *Begged the body.* The Roman custom was not to bury the bodies of malefactors, but they were given up to their friends for this purpose, if demanded by them. But the Jews, having more advanced sanitary customs, and being more afraid of pollution, were not likely to leave any dead bodies to natural decay.

The guard set over the tomb.

60. And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

61. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

62. ¶ Now the next day, [*on the morrow*] that followed [*which is after*] the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63. Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

64. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error [*deceit*] shall be worse than the first.

The two Maries visit the sepulchre.

65. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch [*take a guard, or keep watch*], go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can [*know how*].

66. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN the end of [*after*] the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre[a].

2. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and become as dead *men*.

a Mark xvi, 1—16. Luke xxiv, 1—12. John xx, 1—18.

60. *His own new tomb.* The Jews buried, under ordinary circumstances, outside their cities, and the rich had tombs excavated in rocks.

62. *Now the next day, &c.* According to our mode of reckoning days, by morning and evening, it was the same day; by the Jewish mode of reckoning, by evening and morning, a fresh day had begun after sunset. Friday was the day of preparation for the Saturday, or solemn Sabbath of the Passover. About three o'clock on Friday Jesus dies, and Joseph demands his body, which he wraps up and buries hurriedly. The priests, not yet feeling secure that their alarm and trouble about Jesus are at an end, go to Pilate in the evening, after the Sabbath had in fact begun, on the morning which is after the day of the preparation.

65. *Pilate said unto them.* His words appear to be studiously contemptuous, as of a man who is vexed with himself, and disgusted with those for whom he is acting.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. *In the end of* [*after*] *the Sabbath.* The Jews reckoned their days from sunset to sunset—or practically, and when they had learnt to divide the day into hours, from six o'clock of one evening to six o'clock of the next. We reckon ours from the earliest morning to the latest night, or, by the clock, from 12 o'clock of one night to 12 o'clock of the next. *We* should say "the morning and the evening were the first day." The Hebrews said, "the evening and the morning were the first day." The Sabbath, therefore, as the other days of the week, was reckoned from evening to evening, and began on what corresponded to our Friday evening, and ended with what corresponded to our Saturday evening. The time indicated in this verse is after the Sabbath or Saturday was past—as *we* should say, in common colloquial language, "on Saturday night, or early on Sunday morning." The tendency to regard the day as *beginning* with the light and ending with the darkness, is more natural than the reverse mode of regarding evening as the beginning of a day. Accordingly, even the Jews spoke of morning, noon-day, and evening, as the natural order of the divisions of the day: and a similar feeling seems to have led to the peculiar wording of this verse, "late on the Sabbath," i. e. in the course of the night following the Sabbath. The writer seems to betray the natural feeling, that the first day of the week had not begun, or the Sabbath fully terminated, at six o'clock on Saturday evening. He speaks of the night of the Sabbath, therefore, as it broke into the dawn of the first day.

Jesus has risen.

5. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9. ¶ And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them,

The elders' counsel to the guard.

saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped [*did obeisance to*] him.

10. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

11. ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

12. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13. Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him *away* while we slept.

—*The other Mary*, we learn from Mark xvi, 1, was Mary the mother of James. She was the wife of Alpheus or Cleopas, and was mentioned in chap. xxvii, 55, 56 of this Gospel, as among the attached friends of our Lord who followed him from Galilee, "ministering unto him."

9. *Behold Jesus met them.* There was no actual expectation in the minds of the apostles and disciples at the time of our Lord's crucifixion of his subsequent restoration to life. Whatever had been said to them beforehand to prepare them for this event, had not been understood by them, or had failed to impress them, or had been driven from their memories by the agitation and alarm attending his arrest, condemnation, and awful death. Accordingly, they were not awaiting or looking for any such event as the resurrection. The only interest taken apparently by them, was, according to the common feelings of humanity, in the fate of his dear remains. The persons sent out, or going of their own accord, were women, both because attention to the processes of embalming or other preparations relating to the corpse, not unsuitably devolved on them, and because their interference and interest would involve them in less danger than it would involve men. Expected or not, however, this event is borne testimony to in all the Gospels, in accounts which, though varying in the order and in many of the details, agree in the main fact, that he who was once dead had been seen alive. The whole staple of the subsequent apostolic preaching and correspondence rests also on this fact. That our blessed Lord is now alive in a state of glory and bliss, an emblem and symbol of the happy immortality prepared for those who love him, a forerunner of his followers to the homes of Heaven, is the peculiar, gladdening, and sustaining feature in all living Christian faith.—*And they came and held him by the feet.* The profound, loving, and reverential attachment excited by our Lord in the breasts of all his followers, in the days of his mortality, would render his restoration to life the dearest joy that could visit their hearts. And to this joy would they alone at first be sensible. They would cling to him, and do him homage, simply as the joyfully and unexpectedly restored. But by degrees on their minds, as on those of the disciples generally, would dawn the deep significance of the fact, that the dead was now alive, as related to the testimony it afforded to the divinity of his mission, and that God was with him; to the fact of human death not being human annihilation, or the expiration of the breath being the termination of existence; and to the fact that Christ, in his removal from the scenes of his personal and visible ministry by death, was not removed from life, but liveth for ever at the right hand of God, and is with us to the end of time.

13. *Say ye, His disciples, &c.* The inconsistencies of this story have been often pointed out. When the chief priests made such a point of having the sepulchre narrowly watched, is it likely that they would have allowed it to be done with such negligence? Was it probable that a guard so especially employed and admonished, and changing every three hours, according to the

The eleven meet Jesus.

14. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

16. ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17. And when they saw him, they worshipped [*did obeisance to*] him: but some doubted.

His last commission to them.

18. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power [*authority*] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19. ¶ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in [*into*] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost [*Spirit*]:

20. Teaching them to observe [*keep*] all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world [*age*]. Amen.

Roman custom, would have fallen asleep, so as to remain undisturbed by such a removal? If they had been asleep, how could they know who had taken the body away? By what possible stretch of judicial authority could they have been promised impunity, in so notorious an instance of public neglect, in which the peace of the city and the nation, if not the integrity of the Roman empire, was involved?

18. *All power* [*authority*] *is given unto me, &c.* A connection is shewn between this declaration and that in the subsequent verse by the word "therefore" in v. 19. The Almighty Father had conferred on our blessed Lord all spiritual authority, all power respecting the spiritual wants of men both as regarded their lives on earth, and their destination in heaven. He was henceforth the one Lord, Leader, Instructor, Saviour and Judge of man's spiritual nature. *Therefore* his disciples were to go forth and open his kingdom unto all, teach to all the holy faith he had proclaimed, exhort them to keep all things that Jesus had commanded, and, as the outward sign of their inward conversion, to baptize them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, or into an inward reception of that faith which was ordained of God, manifested and conveyed by his Son Jesus Christ, and infused into the souls and confirmed in the hearts of mankind by the influences of their Holy Spirit. And thus Christ would be ever with them.

20. *Lo! I am with you alway, &c.* Now that they knew that the bands of death no longer held their Lord, and that he was restored to them in full spiritual life, they need never, he assured them, fear his being again removed from them. He was now in immortal and glorified life; his trials and his subjection to man ended, and would be for ever theirs. Blessed truth to us, as to them! Jesus is with us and with our souls—the unchangeable strengthener, guide, consoler and animator of our spiritual being—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Lo! he is with us alway, to the end of time, and into the bosom of eternity.

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